

**WHILE I AM MY HAIR
MY HAIR IS ME -
literary analysis of a narrative inquiry
into TEACHER IDENTITY formation**

by

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Abstract

This dissertation had its genesis in experiences of a life, a pedagogic performance of aspects of that life, a pedagogic story that became an artefact of that performance and still more aspects of that life, my life. In moving from experience to performance to story, revelations about my life surfaced: some in and during the living of that life, new and different other understandings within and without the pedagogic performance, and still others from the fixing of the performance into a script. Other revelations about my story of my self came from applying the techniques of literary analysis to the script written from that performance. The purpose of this dissertation is to discuss the idea that literary analysis of personal narratives brings a new lens and therefore, perhaps, altered discourse and increased depth to the fields of pedagogic stories, teacher inquiry, narrative inquiry, and self study.

This dissertation proposes that within narrative inquiry self-written narratives could be made richer by literary analysis or close reading of the narrative itself. Literary analysis in this dissertation refers to an attempt at thorough examination of literary, language, narrative and related techniques used by an author in a piece of literary writing, such as a narrative of teacher identity formation.

Contained within this dissertation is the script of a performance piece turned prose poem, which becomes the subject of the author's own close reading. Through this close reading understandings are reached, revelations are encountered and the author and analyzer of the narrative comes to a changed understanding of his teacher identity.

This dissertation proposes that those exploring story and engaging in narrative inquiry in educational research, consciously, unconsciously, with guidance, or alone, include figurative language which speaks as powerfully and as clearly as the denotative structures of the words that they use. This dissertation demonstrates through the examination of the author's own narrative how narrative inquiry can be enriched in meaning making through a practice of close reading and literary analysis. The dissertation proposes that arrival at the phenomenological epoché might provide space for new self-understanding arrived at through techniques derived from the study of literature.

Keywords: teacher identity; narrative inquiry; performative inquiry; teacher inquiry; literary analysis; aesthetics of self.

*To the two surprises of my life: Tatiana and
Rhonnyn, who remind me daily
that it is all good.*

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Table of Contents

Approval.....	ii
Partial Copyright Licence	iii
Abstract.....	iv
Dedication.....	v
Acknowledgements.....	vi
Table of Contents.....	vii
Introductory Image	ix
Chapter 1. A Pedagogic Hairdo: Introduction.....	1
Opening Quote.....	1
Why a Pedagogic Narrative?	5
Representing Self.....	10
Teacher I.....	20
A Public of Self.....	22
On every one else's apparent need for me to be publicly introspective	22
On looking across False Creek from my living room window	22
Acquisition of Intersubjective Language	33
The Spectator of Self.....	48
The Desire of Self	51
Chapter 2. The Place of the Hair Story in my Practice	59
Opening the Self to Students.....	59
Jennifer VII.....	59
Opening the Self to the Academic Community	64
Chapter 3. The Hair Narrative.....	67
Chapter 4. Inquiries	136
Identity as a Performative Act	139
i embody the event of my death.....	142
Aesthetics of Appearance.....	148
Politics of Appearance	152
Pedagogy of Appearance	153
The Interstood Performances	155
Narrating and Being Narrated.....	156
Approaching Narrative Inquiry	161
Creating the Narrative for Inquiry.....	164
Teaching and Teaching Teacher Inquiry	167
Teacher III.....	167
The Inquirer's Data	167
The Inquirer's Question	171
Teacher VI	180

Chapter 5. A Literary Analysis of the Script.....	181
Situating and Swimming	181
I want to sit uncomfortably among no one	181
Close Reading, Part One	188
The Opening: (lines 1 — 61).....	190
The Narrative Hook: "This is a photograph of me" and lines 62 — 118.....	196
Close Reading continued: The Artist and his Medium, lines 119 — 215.	200
Close Reading continued: The Artist and his Brush, lines 216 — 297.....	205
Noticing — Part Two: (Lines 298-528)	208
Chapter 6. Taking from the Literary Analysis: Remains and Conclusions	213
Stepping Away and Taking from Close Reading.....	213
Noticing and Concluding — Parts Three and Four: (Lines 529 - end).....	213
Pictures Beside a Thousand Words.....	216
What Matters	220
What Matters Next.....	223
References.....	227
Appendix A. Excerpt from <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i> by Harper Lee. pp 50 - 52.....	240



"This is a photograph of me."

(the author)

Chapter 1. A Pedagogic Hairdo: Introduction

But my hair had already attained a kind of mastery. I had been so governed and enslaved my sense of my own aesthetic through my struggles with my hair, that while my hair now gloried in afro equality, or even supremacy, I found other scabs to pick at, old scars healed but visible, parts of me not to like. My unruly hair had taught me the inner critic of my art of self.

"The Hair Narrative," lines 324 -330. ¹

This dissertation had its genesis in experiences of a life, a pedagogic performance of aspects of that life, a pedagogic story that became an artefact of that performance and still more aspects of that life, my life. In moving from experience to performance to story, revelations about my life surfaced: some in and during the living of that life, new and different other understandings within and without the pedagogic performance, and still others from the fixing of the performance into a script. Other revelations about my story of my self came from applying the techniques of literary analysis to the script written from that performance. The purpose of this dissertation is to

¹ A note on the verse and prose reproduced here: In order to preserve some of the feeling of spontaneity and personal involvement with my verse, prose, and illustrations I have chosen a font for all of those pieces that mirrors my "teacher" printing on the chalkboard. Having made that choice I found it necessary to comply with the publishing requirements for this dissertation by converting these pieces to pdf images which are not as easy to read as my readers might wish. While a problem I hope that it might also convey a more authentic experience of my students who encountered these pieces in the more immediate contact within my classroom in my own handwriting.

discuss the idea that literary analysis of personal narratives brings a new lens and therefore, perhaps, altered discourse and increased depth to the fields of pedagogic stories, teacher inquiry and self study.

I centre this exploration on the story of my hair — a piece I have performed for every group of students I have taught since I first imagined the piece in the early 1990s. While the performed narrative must necessarily alter some aspects of its being when I choose to wrestle it onto digital paper for the very first time, I have few other ways of sharing my hair story with the locationally or temporally absent. That story of self is on the pages of Chapter Three. I invite you to be my spectator, since you cannot be my audience.² As a performing installation artist and sculptor³ I have explored my self and place in the world through art which have proven difficult to share on paper or when displaced in time, "The Hair Narrative" is a continuation of the work of exploring self.

The prose-poem script of the pedagogic performance was written after dozens of performances. The hair story, as I will explain in Chapter Five, I came to use as a pedagogic story, at once personal and meant to teach. While the story was, at first, an off-the-cuff performance, it was refined through myriad retellings and eventually, for the purposes to be explored in this dissertation, committed to a digital record via speech recognition software and then made "unchangeable" through conversion to images of printed pages. I shall not change the written narrative again.

² I chose here to make the distinction so ably applied by Rancière in *The Emancipated Spectator*. (London: Verso, 2009) where the audience "hears," while the spectator "sees." Rancière attempts to argue against the idea that "looking is deemed the opposite of acting" (page 2.) Instead, Rancière is suggesting that "The spectator is active, just like the student. He observes, he selects, he compares, he interprets" (page 9). This is the kind of active viewing I invite from my reader.

³ Examples are: Marlowe Irvine, "Broken" Series - Multimedia Sculptures ("Broken China," "Broken Promises," "Broken Lines," "Broken Connections," "Broken Toys," Broken Record (in progress) Vancouver, BC: 2009 - Present; Marlowe Irvine, "Guerilla" Art Installations: "Vancouver for the Shy Tourist," Vancouver, BC: 2003 - 2012; Marlowe Irvine, "The VAG will kick you out," Vancouver, BC: 2005 - 2011 (revision planned); Marlowe Irvine, "Slicing, Smashing, Dashing and Stretching: Intercultural Art Appreciation through Imperialist Practice," Vancouver BC: 2003 - 2014; Marlowe Irvine, "Socks Will Always Find You," World-wide mail art project, 1996-2005.

I have had so very many audiences and spectators for this performance over the years that the movement of "The Hair Story" from a pedagogic tool to the site of ongoing teacher inquiry into practice and being-as-teacher seems, in retrospect, like bread crumbs on forest trails. As I reassembled that path in the composition of this dissertation it seemed that the paths converged only when I revisited the narrative. I have tracked the arc of my understandings of my own teacher inquiry and created an after-the-fact coherence of which I was not conscious through its initial experience. Nor was I aware that I was "already ... narrated from a third person perspective prior to ... even gaining the competence of self-narration."⁴ This newly developed sense of an order or intentionality in experience is what teacher inquiry has brought to me. I hope to enrich that practice, in turn, by adding new ideas into the repertoire of inquiry practices within teacher inquiry.

I hope that my reader will read the hair story first in its entirety for any enjoyment of its form and function they may find and then, before proceeding, read the story again seeking understanding and insight. However, that hope comes from years of being an English teacher and may be too imbedded in the traditions of literary analysis through close reading, the noticing of techniques of figurative writing, and attention to the connection between form and content that I have always so enjoyed. This may not necessarily be good advice to others. But my experiences as an English teacher have led me to the place of using literary analysis as an informing technique for examining personal narrative. I am not yet ready to abandon this tradition that seems to have fallen into disuse any more than is Terry Eagleton: "Like clog dancing, the art of analyzing works of literature is almost dead on its feet. The whole tradition of what Nietzsche called 'close reading' is in danger of sinking without a trace."⁵ In counter-argument, I believe I have found an expanded use for this effort and that utility arose within my experiences as an English Language Arts teacher.

This dissertation is also firmly situated in teacher inquiry as I have come to understand and practice as I will explore in Chapter 6. That understanding arose

⁴ Anthony P. Kerby, *The Narrative and the Self*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991) p. 6.

⁵ Terry Eagleton, *How to Read Literature*. (London: Yale University Press, 2013) p. ix.

because I am not only a teacher of teachers and Secondary Language Arts students; it also is imbedded in my work as a teacher of Secondary Science. My first Bachelor's degree contained both an English Major and a History minor but I have always also loved the sciences. When presented with an opportunity early in my career to return to university full time I enrolled in a Bachelor of Science program as a Chemistry major. While I was short enough credits to complete the degree when life circumstances recalled me to teaching full time I was able to teach in the sciences because of my university training and passion.

As sometimes happens the pursuit of teacher inquiry arises when there is a discrepancy, interruption, or question of practice. I confronted just such an issue as a teacher of literature and science. I loved my literature classes. I felt engaged and engaging; challenges with classes were fascinating and the spur for increased effort and great satisfaction. My science classes were painful and seemed long and boring to all involved. Even students who overlapped (perhaps enrolled in both English 11 and Chemistry 11 with me) seemed to be changed by the trek down the hall from classroom to school lab. My inquiry question, therefore, was simple enough: "How can I change my practice in science classes to engage me as much as my practice in Language Arts classes always has?" The answer after some months of self-study was also simple enough: In English class I was trying to transform students into individuals who would love literature and the arts of poetry and drama and film and illustration; in chemistry class I was teaching about the inert "stuff" of science. The solution in my practice was surprisingly easy: I shared and embraced my passion for science and sought to transform students into scientists rather than teach them science. The results were all evidence I have ever needed about the power and necessity of teacher inquiry. By the following year our school (thanks to a principal I considered insightful, who was convinced by my success and the pedagogic value he saw in the idea) had an Interdisciplinary Studies Department where any teacher could offer to teach any two subjects to the same group of students. Soon I was teaching English and Science 8, 9

and 10 as well as a "Sciences Co-op" of English 11, Chemistry 11 and Biology 11.⁶ The human and personal nature of teacher inquiry with its professional vulnerability and self discovery also lent itself to pedagogic story telling.

Why a Pedagogic Narrative?

The main claim for the use of narrative in educational research is that humans are storytelling organisms who, individually and socially, lead storied lives. The study of narrative, therefore, is the study of the ways humans experience the world.⁷

I would like to tell the story of the first telling of the hair story that has become the focus and *raison d'être* for writing a script and seeking to examine it through close reading. But I don't know that story. Or rather, I have ideas about its genesis, recollections of early performances, artefacts of explanatory drawings on overhead sheets or a classroom white board reproduced in the prose poem in Chapter Three even awareness of reasons why I felt and still feel the story of my hair history to be a powerful pedagogic tool. However, unlike the script created that now has come to represent the pedagogic performance there is not a single clear narrative thread of the creation and development of the pedagogic narrative. Rather there is a tangle of threads and lint left behind from telling after telling after telling each adding some connections while sloughing off others.

I know that "The Hair Narrative" had some of its origins in a workshop given by Clare LaMeres presenting on a book of hers entitled *The Winner's Circle: Yes, I Can Self Esteem Lessons in the Secondary Classroom*. Ms. LaMeres suggests in this book that

⁶ Some of my fellow teachers at the school embraced other combinations such as Math/Art; Spanish/French; a Business Education co-op; and other combination until tightening budgets made such timetable combinations too difficult to continue.

⁷ F. M. Connelly and D. J. Clandinin, "Stories of Experience and Narrative Inquiry," *Educational Researcher* Volume 19. No. 5. p.2

the self esteem of students might be raised by using an activity she called "Hair History"⁸:

this activity gives students an opportunity to share a unique experience that they have gone through with their hair. Not only will they be sharing something connected to their identity, but they will also be seeing that others have had similar experiences and also survived!⁹

LaMeres gives a teacher script and writing prompt for a "15 minute" activity for students. She advises that the teacher is to give a brief description of some incidents involving the teacher's hair then invite students to create their own hair narratives and share their own hair stories with one another.

This is how I began "The Hair Narrative" a few days after the Clare LaMeres workshop at a Surrey School District Professional Development Day in the early 1990s. The narrative served as a prompt for student writing. But as Ms LaMeres had predicted in her description for the activity, some laughter was generated, not just among the students but also in reaction to my own story. I was being laughed at and that laughter reminded me of my insecurities and self agonizing about my hair that had haunted my adolescent years. I vacillated between abandoning this activity and trying to make my telling of the story less personal. Neither of those solutions, attempted several times each, was satisfactory. I began to wonder what I was really teaching students, if "enhancing self-esteem" was sufficient justification to put me through what I was feeling; certainly not an enhancement of my personal or professional esteem. And when students in subsequent years, having heard through the student grapevine about this story came to my class expecting to hear the hair story, I had to think quite seriously. None spoke of the story as a writing prompt, only as entertainment.

I suppose I felt some need to reach the adolescent me, so insecure, so dominated by my external appearance that I decided to embrace the story to teach,

⁸ Clare LaMeres, *The Winner's Circle: Yes, I Can Self Esteem Lessons in the Secondary Classroom*. (Newport Beach, LaMeres Lifestyles Unlimited, 1990) pp 74-76.

⁹ LaMeres, p. 74.

through personal narrative, a lesson about living which I wished someone had shared with me and my own adolescent self. Perhaps within my classes there were a few students similarly driven to dire self-criticality of him or herself as "artist of a self-look"; plagued by the inner critic of self. I needed a professionally supportable Language Arts based way of sharing self that was both honest and protective of the one behind the mask I wear as teacher.

For the most part, the invention of a teaching persona is a fairly conscious act. Teachers who are unconscious of their teaching self might get lucky; that is, they might adopt or adapt something familiar — a manner, a voice — that actually works in the classroom from the beginning. Dumb luck happens. But most of the successful teachers I have known have been deeply aware that their self-presentation involves, or has involved at some point, the donning of a mask.¹⁰

I am aware that the use of the word "mask," here is at once too strong, too opaque a concept to describe something as porous and revealing as the physicality and assumed persona I bring to my work as a classroom teacher and instructor in teacher inquiry. Yet, in some other ways "mask" is not robust enough a concept. I have relied on my teacher-costume to shield some aspects of my deepest self from the challenges of disclosure, of the balance of being genuine and open with the need to maintain a professionalism and self-protection for my and my students' sakes.

It was the mask engaged your mind,
And after set your heart to beat,
Not what's behind.¹¹

The mask I wear as a teacher has always shared characteristics of the mask I wear as a sculptor. When cutting composite materials with a high speed rotary blade one

¹⁰ Jay Parini. *Art of Teaching*. (Cary, NC: Oxford University Press, Incorporated, 2005.) ProQuest ebrary, Accessed October 28, 2014. P. 58.

¹¹ William Butler Yeats, "The Mask," found at <http://www.online-literature.com/yeats/800/>. Accessed October 30, 2014.

often stands in the path of flying fragments and fractured blades. My mask in the studio is a transparent cellulose acetate visor that covers me from forehead to neck. Like my teacher mask this visor is initially transparent and reveals my physical nature to observers but that protective screen, like my teacher mask gains scars which may become what is seen from the outside and may eventually obscure my vision as well as the vision of those who would see me. Unlike my face guard my teacher mask cannot be easily replaced by a trip to a building supply store, but the teacher mask does require a different form of renewal, which I find in teacher inquiry.

Teacher inquiry is a seeking of those areas of contact and interaction between genuine vulnerability and willingness to accept challenge, change and identity shift. Teacher Inquiry is the assumption of many layered and inter-twined ideas that seem to me as complex as the costuming, make-up, masks, accents and voices, positions and gestures of the stage actor who may do the best acting by fully engaging inner-self with the character they present. I sought the disclosure balance between myself as artist, teacher, teacher inquirer and vulnerable individual through the use of pedagogic narrative.

Why create a pedagogic narrative to share with students? Three principal reasons: to explore the concept of self honestly and in vulnerability, to explore the relationship of concepts of self and other to language (in all forms including tonal, visual and movement representations) and to call into question the notions of literature as solely the creation of the other none of which were covered in curriculum documents in the public school system in which I taught.

The challenge for a teacher when seeking ways to empower students is that he or she must release control of the curriculum; to realize that curriculum is not "set in concrete," but created in response to the needs, interests, concerns, and desires of the students. Curriculum is an organic co-evolving creature simultaneously formed through the interactions of

teacher and students within a specific context of location, time, and inquiry.¹²

The last of these reasons I would like to address first as it arises from a simple enough motive: if the young authors in Language Arts are to have confidence in their abilities in authorship, teachers may inadvertently create, for young writers, an apparent standard, too high to attempt to emulate. The tradition of the English classes I have experienced has principally been one of the study of published works. Those pieces of language that someone, at some time, deemed worthy of editing and publishing. But, if I bring my classes only to the study of the "best" of the Western Canon, do I expect all of my adolescent students to write as well as Shakespeare? When "only the best" is to be studied and subject to analysis in class, what does this do to a secondary student's confidence in her own work? I am aware of many issues with the Canon but I am also aware that the resources to which I have access as public school teacher do not often lie outside that canon. My own story, is clearly not the work of a famous writer; is not a part of the Great Western Canon of literature, but part of my sharing it with students was to bring them into a discourse of ideas around authorship of self and analysis of the not-so-great literature as legitimate and inspiring pursuits.

My story revolves around self and a primary reason for creating it as a pedagogic story is to begin the exploration of that concept with my students. And the narrative is authentic.

An authentic presence in the teacher helps establish both trust and then inquiry, such that learners come to feel there is meaning in the world and in their lives, that inquiry itself is meaningful and trustworthy.¹³

¹² Lynn Fels, "Spinning straw into gold: Curriculum, performative literacy, and student empowerment." *English Quarterly*, (2002) 34(1) Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com.proxy.lib.sfu.ca/docview/233296019>. Accessed March 16, 2012.

¹³ Charles Scott, *Becoming Dialogue: Martin Buber's Concept of Turning to the Other as Educational Praxis*. (PhD diss. Simon Fraser University, 2011) p. 242.

Representing Self

The pedagogic story became, for me as an educator, a method by which to explore the difficult notions of the language of self and other with my Language Arts students. I felt that if the students with whom I worked were to come closer to a postmodernist understanding of the nature of language, they might gain from exposure to both a representational theory of language and a discursive theory of language.

In parallel, I wanted to move students closer to a view of the author of literary work as a self who was included within the work, not only as a character in an autobiography, for example, but also as a participant in the discourse that the literary work enters upon its sharing with others. I believed that young writers need to be introduced to the idea that they, too, are authors, not just of the work, which they might submit as part of assessment, but also authors of their own lives. In doing so I wanted my students to explore the concept of self as well as their selves.

Some thought on the self as a philosophic concept will help me situate first the language of self and then the interactions of "selves" using language as the vehicle for both understanding and interstanding.¹⁴ I would like to approach the language of self and the notion of self initially through the path that my attempt to understand experience as described phenomenologically has made necessary. Plato had placed the formation of the meaning of concepts in the realm of a recognition: a recognition by our souls of a "resemblance" of a concept to that concept's ideal form. Plato, in his Theory of Ideas, says

that since there is such a thing as memory, the ideas are in existent things, because memory is only conversant about what is stable and enduring; and that no other thing is durable except ideas.¹⁵

¹⁴ I use "interstanding" here and throughout this dissertation in the sense I derive from Mark C. Taylor and Esa Saarinen, *Imagologies: Media Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 1994) as a less hierarchical notion than understanding. More in Chapter 4.

¹⁵ Diogenes Laertius, *The Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*, trans. C.D. Yonge. <http://xylib.znufe.edu.cn/wgfljd/%B9%C5%B5%E4%D0%DE%B4%C7%D1%A7/pw/diogenes/dlplato.htm/#XII>. Accessed June 2, 2010.

For Plato, then the self is a recognized thing; a concept to which we refer back to an earlier existence or experience with the self.

Conversely, Aristotle and more formally Aquinas say that concepts are the result of sensory experiences being generalized and categorized.

"Praeterea, nihil est in intellectu quod non sit prius in sensu."¹⁶

I can think of innumerable other shapes about which there can be no suggestion that I ever got to know them through the senses and, despite that, I can demonstrate various properties about them just as in the case of the triangle. All these properties are obviously true since they are known clearly by me, and therefore they are something and not simply nothing... I also remember that, even earlier, when I was completely immersed in the objects of the senses, I always held the most certain of all was true for this type.¹⁷

Are we creatures of thought or experience? Rationalists or empiricists? "Pre-wired" for language à la Noam Chomsky or blank slates à la John Locke? That dichotomy between the two ideas of language which had been maintained separately, for the most part, in philosophic thought, comes to some reconciliation, in my view, in the philosophic work done in phenomenology and post-structural thought such as those of Husserl, Merleau-Ponty and Bakhtin (as interpreted by Michael Holquist) explored below.

Husserl explains in *Logical Investigations*¹⁸ that then current theories of the formation of concepts, building on the Aristotelian idea in which the general is abstracted from resemblances between individual objects, is misleading. He does not say this

¹⁶ Thomas Aquinas, *Quaestiones disputatae de veritate*q. 2 a. 3 arg. 19. <http://www.corpusthomicum.org/qdv02.html>. Accessed June 2, 2010. My translation would be: "Nothing is in the mind that was not first in the senses."

¹⁷ René Descartes, *Meditations and Other Metaphysical Writing*. trans. Desmond Clarke (London: Penguin, 2003) 56-57.

¹⁸ Edmund Husserl, *Logical Investigation*. trans. J.N. Findlay (London: Routledge and Keagan Paul, 1970)

generalizing is wrong, rather he is saying that this explanation begs the question it proposes by assuming that the concept for the categorization of objects as similar is required before the objects can be grouped in order to compare them and then derive the concept from the similarities found. And this difficulty would exist whether we were trying to define a concept delineated by or linked to sensory data or one tied to a theoretical *a priori* comparison. We would also, then, be left with the problem of where self lies: sensed and constructed or existent and discovered.

Husserl's solution begins with the reminder that the senses which allow us the information with which we categorize that which they sense, are also the same senses, constitute the same method, by which categorization was or is to be done. An easy example might be to say that the experience of colour comes through our experience of sight and the experience of red has some overlap with the experience of green. So the knowledge that colours exist and can be categorically separated from scents is a necessary part of the experience of the sense of sight with which we encounter it. These are the phenomena of experience and their categorization is dependent not on them being defined as categories but on being experienced.

Concepts, or at least the knowledge of concepts, operate out of a framework of experiences that precede and also transcend the reflection on those experiences that constitute the development of the concept. For Husserl, the specifics of experience discovered phenomenologically reveal the possible knowledge(s) open to us and create the forms of experiences, and categories of experiences, of which knowledge consists. Husserl believed that this recognition of the centrality of phenomenology could provide a foundation for all knowledge and return philosophy to the central position it had once held as the creator of epistemologies, a position from which philosophy seemed to have been displaced from by the scientific method — itself centrally grounded in sensory data but determined to classify without recognizing the question that begs.

Merleau-Ponty refined Husserl's idea with his notion of "motor intentionality,"¹⁹ the reciprocal nature of the world we can sense with our senses. We cannot avoid the phenomenon and the experience our senses create because the experience of a colour is as much an experience of certain wavelengths of light as it is an experience of the eye's reaction to those wavelengths. Perception is not something that is done, but the frame on which what is done is built. I am still very much, as Bishop Berkeley pointed out,²⁰ a prisoner of my own senses. The data they provide are my universe, but the data also influences what I perceive in the universe that those senses are creating.

One of the experiences to which I would like to apply this phenomenological approach is the experience of feeling, and of forming the concept of being a distinct self. On a sensory level this might seem reasonably easy to do. I touch an object or another person and I have an experience that seems to entail separateness, of otherness. I look at another person, and I have a similar sense that a distinction can be made. But seeing and sight, touching and being touched, are neither a guarantee of otherness, nor a door to understanding otherness. I cannot, as a parallel example, tell from looking at my eyes that they are a reliable source of experiences. Even if I were to examine in minute detail, say via a dissection of one of my own eyes, the sensory data available to me in that exploration would be of no relevance to the experience of sight and not just because I now only have one eye to take it all in. In addition, the state of medical knowledge today might allow me to explain, or at least obtain an explanation of exactly how the eye works, but neither descriptions of the dissection nor current medical knowledge give the sensation, or even a particularly reliable sense of the sensation, of sight to someone who did not possess it. This brings me to one of the central issues of education: the creation within the other of its own subjective knowledge.

The trap in this method of dealing with the world and establishing otherness, at first glance might seem to be its subjectivity. If I can't make an other understand the

¹⁹ see Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Phenomenology of Perception*. trans. Colin Smith (New York: Routledge, 2002 [electronic resource]) particularly Part I.

²⁰ see George Berkeley, *A Treatise Concerning Human Understanding*.
http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/A_Treatise_Concerning_the_Principles_of_Human_Knowledge.
Accessed September 15, 2014.

experience, how can I know that that other shares it? That nagging suspicion we can develop that “what-it-feels-like-for-me” is somehow different from “what-it-feels-like-for-you” could appear to be an issue. However, Husserl and Merleau-Ponty are describing a quite different form of subjectivity: the jointly felt experiences and therefore jointly subjective nature of human experience. The interiority of the subjectivity so conceived, then, is an experienced interiority and experienced interiority is not necessarily self-contained, in fact is not, I would suggest, ever truly self-contained, never isolated but interdependent, actually intersubjective. How can the experience of subjective phenomena ever be "shared" except via a communication, a language?

Bakhtin wrestles with this idea in his early work on aesthetics²¹ — a field where subjectivity still holds large sway in the public mind even as post-structuralist ideas may have called the very essence of subjectivity into question in the arts and many academic realms. His writing in this area provides part of the answer to shared interiority. He does this through examining aesthetic experience as a particularly telling example of just how "unseparate" our experiences are.

Recognizing that our sense of ourselves as subjects is actually constituent in and constituted by our sense of the otherness of those around us, Bakhtin outlines the aesthetic experience as a refinement of, not a separation from, the I and thou. “Aesthetic form is founded and validated from within the *other*.”²² While the other here is clearly the author of a literary text, Bakhtin goes on to refine his idea into a more general theory of an intersubjective nature of aesthetics.

Bakhtin seems to have a phenomenological sense of aesthetic experience that is grounded in the relationship between self and other. A relationship that has an immediacy and an urgency. He makes the “aesthetic act,” by which he means the striving to give form and meaning to the other in and through art, the most authentic of all intersubjective acts. Our sense of the other and the distinct self who is not the other arises most directly from the discrepancies that divide our experiences of the aesthetic

²¹ Mikhail Bakhtin, “Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity,” *Art and Answerability*. eds. M. Holquist and V. Liapunov (Austin: University of Texas Press. 1990).

²² Bakhtin, “Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity,” p. 90.

act from those experiences as they happen in the other. In the act of attempting to connect with the other, even though that effort is ultimately futile given the unique nature of our subjective experience, we come to our most insightful experiences of self through co-experience of the aesthetic with the other. A pedagogic narrative may be the connection through language and aesthetics among selves.

The points of contact for our subjectivity lie in language. Bakhtin, in his examination of the written word, focuses our attention on the central role of language in the intersubjectivity of aesthetic acts. So for Bakhtin the answer to the problem of a veracity of intersubjectivity lies in subjectivity. I can come to a sense of myself because I can see that I lie outside the category myself that you express. You perceive me as other and I you. Because of this, I build a sense of self, in the beginning, out of a sense that I am conceived of as other by you. You objectify me and so I can subjectify my self. I will speak a me for you to hear. And, I would like to propose that each of us learn to objectify a "myself" within "ourselves" as subjective.

So as an educator in bringing young writers to a place of considering the concept of self I have also brought them to a place of exploring other. Do I also model for them an acquisition of personal agency? "A narrative method has changed my thought and action around my own inner government and, in turn, has given me a lighter and freer sense of myself as an educator and human being."²³ May it do the same for my students.

The hair performance/narrative/script strives to move the awareness of self and other into an area where self as composer, performer, author, analyst and other as self moves toward, I hoped, an interstanding. This idea of a self that can be shared, to be supportable, must be separated from and contrasted with a representative view of self. How might a representational view of language help to bridge the gap between self and other while retaining a "subjectivity" sufficient to maintain itself as a legitimate view? While the gap was often insisted upon by the teachers I experienced growing up, the artificiality of the idea that I can be 'subjective' has been made clear by a massive body

²³ L. Fowler, *A Curriculum of Difficulty: Narrative Research in Education and the Practice of Teaching*. (New York: Peter Lang International Academic Publishers, 2006) p. 10.

of post-structuralist work, scattered throughout this dissertation. A representational view of language might say, for example, that if I tell you that I "have a grandmother living in New York" you gain knowledge about me because our group of language users assigns the label "grandmother" to certain female relatives and the label "New York" to a particular place. You would understand too, that my grandmother could also be labelled "alive." Most of us, particularly when referring to literature, seem to entertain a representative view of language at least for the meaning(s) of words. Literary analysis may use the names of the characters in the novels, for example, as though they represent consciousnesses.

But a representational view of language may not be the correct approach for the analysis of a literary work, particularly one I have written myself. "Grandmother" in my sentence above means far more than a labelable entity to me, as surrounding the word and encased within it are physical, emotional, real, and imagined aspects of grandmother. In a dialogic exchange, a distinct and supportable sense of my grandmother as a physically real entity did not exist for you until you and I engaged, and discourse and language around her was traded; I needed your "other" to bring the idea to fullness.²⁴ In a discourse you have now formed your own knowledge of my grandmother as true and accurate, as reliable and testable as my own. Part of the knowledge you have gained comes from a representational idea of the label; you know from the use of the word among speakers of our common language that she presents or identifies as female and she is or I have pronounced her to be the female parent of one of my parents; you imagine her to be old in an absolute sense as well as in a relative one. Part of this comes from your own relationship with the word "grandmother," part of it from the "definition" of grandmother you came to understand as a speaker of our common language. In all likelihood you and I understood the term grandmother long before either of us could define "grandmother" or apply it as a label. But the term grandmother, in whatever form I first pronounced it, was a name not a label.

In a representational view of language distinguishing between "name" and "label" might be difficult. In a more discursive or dialogic view of language, I do not see these

²⁴ Charles Scott, p. 34.

words as interchangeable. My name is not stuck to me; it is a part of me and in a very real sense my name "is" me. In choosing to refer to me as "Marlowe" my parents entered into an interchange with me in orders of magnitude different than writing Marlowe on a sticky piece of tape and pasting it to my forehead. For good or ill they chose, what is in the culture in which I live, an infrequent label for a person — an unusual name. But my name was not and could not be unusual or infrequent in my life. It began the dialogue and became the matter of the discourse between the subject mother and the subject father and the subject Marlowe.

How we perceive ourselves is bound to how others "name and position" us (as what), individually or at institutional and social levels. True, we are conditioned by such positioning, but what ultimately matters is knowing that we are not determined by it. Hence, the distinction between who we are and what we are becomes critical to our individual freedom and capacity to act anew, which Arendt argues, is meaningless without a name, a "who" attached.²⁵

And as for all who read this, that discourse among "namers" begins the shaping of the understood identity of self, just as it is for the students who I teach.

This understanding helps us to avoid a monologic view of the words of a language.²⁶ Everyone who speaks and everyone who listens is responsible for and in debt to the words of the dialogues of their culture and language. Students might do well to understand that language is created and recreated as it is used; it is situated where it is used; it carries with it a past and a future and an unfolding present. When I speak a word I speak its history; when I write a word I read its future; neither its history nor its future are single entities. The same is true of the young author, less experienced than I am perhaps, but equal to the task of using language richly dripping with meaning. Words

²⁵ Karen Ann Meyer and Lynn Fels, "Imagining Education: An Arendtian Response to an Inmate's Question," *Canadian Journal of Education* 36.3 (2013): p. 309.

²⁶ I use here Bakhtin's view of the monologic versus dialogic from M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination* ed. M. Holquist, translated by C. Emerson and M. Holquist (Austin, University of Texas Press, 1981.)

in English exist within and are dialogic among those who speak English and among those who speak any language.

The same holds true of my name, of my "self". There is no universal or unitary truth of "Marlowe;" the discourse in and when that word is spoken is complex and layered. Is the me you see, the me that I see? It is Christopher Marlowe for whom my parents named me; it is a detective in a novel or a film; and my optometrist's daughter.²⁷ My name is a promise of remembrance and the certainty of forgottenness. I cannot escape the traces of all of this in my name. I might have thought that I could use my name to label the self that I feel inside but some of the work of Mikhail Bakhtin reminds me that the meaning of my name is created and recreated only when you or I speak it or write it and you or I hear or read it.²⁸

Identity also calls for a story.

Who somebody is or was we can only know by knowing the story of which he is himself the hero—his biography, in other words. Everything else we know of him, including the work he may have produced and left behind, tell us only what he is or was.²⁹

A pedagogic story of self, then has two functions in the classroom. First, listening to a pedagogical story may help students to come to understand who the author/teacher is as a person, but it also may give them a sense of agency in constructing narratives in which they are the hero/first person. As well,

My identity for myself is the identity I am conscious of, the identity I can bring to awareness. This identity is not necessary something objective and pre given that can simply be turned toward and noted.³⁰

²⁷ My optometrist's daughter and I share a name but she was named neither for Christopher Marlowe, Raymond Chandler's detective, or me.

²⁸ I will return to my name and my relationship with it in Chapter 4.

²⁹ Hanna Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1958) p. 186.

³⁰ A. P. Kerby, p. 25.

The student's identity may escape that less powerful place of something "noted" because the student thinks of it as a "given." Instead the student can see that identity is brought to awareness and over which the student has some control.

Identity is honed through our own narrative actions.

The self is generated and is given unity in and through its own narratives, in its own recounting and hence understanding of itself. The self, and this is a crucial point, is essentially a being of reflexivity coming to itself in its own narrational acts.³¹

My composing and enacting of "The Hair Narrative," the revisions encountered in each retelling and its migration into a script, and then finally, my literary analysis of "The Hair Narrative" pushed my own understandings of who I am as a person, teacher, parent, self, and other.

³¹ A. P. Kerby p. 41.

Teacher I

I am an artist,
No, really.

With my voice, mostly,
but books, body, ballpoint, and best
practices
from bell to bell

I create a three dimensional,
temporal, emotional,

just about,

multi-media performance.

I make an atmosphere and dip the canvas in it.

Not my canvas,

no, a borrowed one,
covered with years of lines, and colours,
sounding notes, and melodies,
the "not-student" all but chipped away.

by others,
though with its sometimes help,
sometimes agreement and sometimes fight.

sometimes stained.

a torn bit.

some sourness.

The work of years, un-erasable, un-coverable,

But, I must believe,
if I want to continue,
still able to be shaped, tuned, tinted.

So,

When it leaves the studio,
When my time with it is over,
it will wear some tiny touch
of one artist
who wanted it to be alive.

Marlowe Irvine

A Public of Self

On everyone else's apparent need for me to be publicly
introspective (2006)

Who am I?

One

who evades that question
so well

that I can't
hunt for the question
even when I want to,
and what does that say
of me?

of you,
that you want me to reveal
what I don't wish to see?

so I will not
slice myself open
peel back my hide

cut away sinew and skin
and
get elbow deep in my guts
make a skin shell
by examining my entrails.

I won't hang over my mantle
eyes just glass. a trophy

Perhaps I know myself too well
to be caught in that trap
you want me to set for myself.

Marlowe Irvine

On Looking across False Creek from my living room
window:

Older
not yet aged
i see myself better
through failing eyes,

And the thousands
who peer back
across the water
each reflect
the image
of my lined face
in their glazed eyes.

Marlowe Irvine

From the living room window of my home, I could see thousands of windows in the residential and office towers of Yaletown and the city core. Those windows represent tens of thousands of lives that I will never and can never know. What does this do to me? Am I closer or further from an understanding of myself, and my self because of the presence of those people? Does not seeing others bring me closer to me? I think I must live more in myself because there are so many potential connections lost, fewer people with whom I connect while I know there are so many more to connect with. I, the self I inhabit is the potential stuff of thought of so many more others. Perhaps this is the boon and the curse of being, in one sense or another, in the presence of so many others.

I want to explore here my relationship with my "self" as that relationship is related to, but quite different from, my relationship with "myself."³² "Myself," as I wish to engage with that term throughout this paper, is all of me: the entire created understanding and lacks of understanding, all of the insights, and all of the experiences of other-relatedness in all of its back-and-forthness,³³ as well as in the isolation I have from all of the others with whom there is interaction. "Myself" is at once where I live and who I am. "Myself" is the "me" created and felt in interior dialogue, and while I might respond to my self as-one-thing or my self as-an-other, there is a constant but continuously recreating "myself" with whom my relationship is always a communication, a construction and a renovation. While this might seem to be signifying some specific reference to a signified, as in a something referred to, "myself" is absolutely a discursive understanding of an exchange within an internal discourse.

And as I age, that is become older, not yet become aged, I find that I have to hold a book further from my eyes in order to read it. As with many other of the expected consequences of having spent an increasing number of years living in my body, this declining ability to focus on near, small objects is at times inconvenient, and, at other times, frustrating. It is possible, should I choose to make the effort, to accept the inconveniences of inhabiting an aging body and cluttering mind, by balancing those burdens of longer life against the numerous gains I have made in understanding myself much better, a result of the lengthy cohabitation with my self. But the knowledge would be strikingly different if I had only met my self a few days ago, rather than living with the dynamic and fluid personality I am and seek to explore, define, understand, and now explore the early days of, through analysis of its narrative. My interstanding with myself is different, also, and continues to metamorphose as I meet the other and others whose definition of who I am is always partly a reflection.

³² I intend here and throughout this dissertation that "self" (in quotation marks) refers to the aspects of who I am that are external, experience by others and the outside world; that "myself" (in quotation marks) refers to my inner experiences of who I am and that "other" (in quotation marks) refers to the other as experienced by "myself."

³³ The interrelationship of "self", "myself" and "other" is a central theme in this dissertation. It is a relationship of volley and return that the "other" may not be cognisant of and I am increasingly concerned about as I experience my appearance through the telling and analysis of "The Hair Narrative."

Curiously, I am beginning to see that there may be a parallel between the consequences of the declining elasticity in the lenses of my eyes and this increasing understanding of who I am. Living for a greater time in close proximity to me is not, I am beginning to believe, really, why I know myself better. It may be that I have come to know myself better because the events and instances of my lengthening life have become an interference — a clutter through which I see myself as one further away, more removed, less a “me” and more a “one-over-there-behind-all-that-stuff.” Life experiences have forced me further and further from the immediacy of intimate contact with my self because I seem increasingly to function in response to the detritus accumulated over years of living than to the living itself. And that de-personalizing distance may have made me see me more clearly.

My "self", on the other hand, as I will use the term through this dissertation, is my constructed idea of what you perceive when you look in my direction, listen to me speak, grab my arm, detect my scent on the air, or taste my neck. My “self” is the “me” that I am to everyone who I am not. When you say “you” to me my understanding of the discourse into which we engage is that you are discursively engaged with my “self” rather than with “myself.”

For my purposes, this clearly artficed distinction is important. The distinction is often clear in my mind but because of the language in which I operate very difficult to articulate clearly and consistently. I have toyed within “myself” with giving each of these relics of self-exploration different names but that seems to deemphasize their oneness with the me who tries to make their distinction clear to others. I have also considered using a single term and reframing the discourse around each use to make the way in which I intend the term to be understood, but that deemphasizes the dual nature of a self that is always in dialogue with "myself."

However I might feel about who I am as “myself,” I do feel differently about who my self, as experienced by other, is when I allow awareness of the extent to which your idea of my self can only be partially shaped by me, or you, and can never, should never, be “myself.” When you look at my "self" and I permit your gaze to mean something to me

I hold the image distant from myself and let it only be a gaze of my self. In language this separation and joining find their place.

Your look may say to me “old man,” grey hair, crepey skin, grown child but the thoughts in your head which I create for myself in your glance I know are not thoughts of myself, who is not old, who has a jaunty walk and who hides behind a kind of costume of self about which you can think as you please. (Although, I really do care terribly how you feel, as I want to share through my hair narrative.) In the pedagogic story, I explored in a narrative form that costume that you see when you gaze at my "self"; while the costume sounds like a layer of protection, it is simultaneously porous, revealing brief glimpses of myself I may be ignorant of revealing, and self-tailored very much to try to keep you from thinking anything so accurate as “old man,” or whatever my own perceptions of my vulnerability make me feel I am.

This distinction between self and myself is important, also, to myself as educator. I learned long ago that a simple ego preserving strategy in this educator’s life is to always act the part; act the part of son, friend, Hamlet, teacher, as the critic’s dagger is always blunted for the victim by the certain knowledge that myself can not be criticized because he was not there, too busy, in fact, creating a self as son/friend/Hamlet/teacher, to get fully involved. This too is a fiction, one of self-delusion, but a very comforting delusion. The need for the fiction of the distracted, too busy self provides its own justification and its own self-refutation. If I need to pretend I am too busy how did I ever notice that I was pretending? How did I ever notice the critique from which I protect myself with the carefully crafted illusion of craftlessness.

My self who teaches has very nearly all of my best attributes and qualities, and very few of those parts of me myself would prefer not to share. Parker Palmer tells us that “we teach who we are;”³⁴ I can’t help believing that I “teach who I have taught myself to believe I wish to show others is a good teacher.” A too nice distinction, but one I have clung to for comfort and for protection. I am also comforted, whether justly or not, in my belief that myself is well enough hidden behind or within my self, that no other can see it.

³⁴ Parker Palmer, *The Heart of a Teacher*. (Jossey-Bass: San Francisco, 1998) Chapter 1.

This shadow within myself requires considerable effort to see, but that effort is a moral and personal necessity.³⁵ As Jung describes it the act of understanding, the shadow self also "meets with considerable resistance."³⁶

So for research into my self-as-teacher, I find I need to examine points of contact between "myself" and my "self". As I engage in a reflexive practice as a teacher, I am examining, ludicrously as if "myself" is not involved, the behaviour of the subject of observation, my self.

Just as organisms "continuously regenerate and realize the network of processes (relations) that produced them,"³⁷ my ideas of "self" and "myself" as artist-of-self are situated and temporalized within a current understanding at once as informed as any and as blind as all. I am reminded of Saramago's heroine in *Blindness*³⁸ who remains sighted but hides her sightedness as she struggles to aid and comfort those stricken by a lack of what she alone seems let to possess.

Ernst Fischer writes of the

desire to fulfil our unfulfilled lives through other figures, ...

Evidently man wants to be more than just himself... He is not satisfied with being a separate individual; out of the partiality of his individual life he strives towards a 'fullness' that he senses and demands, towards a fullness of life of which individuality with all its limitations cheats him, towards a more comprehensible, a more just world, a world that makes sense...

³⁵ See Carl Jung, *Aion* (1951). CW 9, Part II: P.8 from: <https://archive.org/stream/collectedworksof92cgju#page/8/mode/2up> accessed July 8, 2014

³⁶ Carl Jung, *Aion* (1951). CW 9, Part II: P.8

³⁷ Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela. "Autopoiesis and Cognition: the Realization of the Living." *Studies in the Philosophy of Science*. eds. Robert S. Cohen and Marx W. Wartofsky (Boston: Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Co., 1980)

³⁸ Jose Saramago, *Blindness*. trans. Giovanni Pontiero (Fort Washington: Harvest Books, 1999)

He feels that he can attain wholeness only if he takes possession of the experiences of others that might potentially be his own. Yet what a man apprehends as his potential includes everything that humanity as a whole is capable of. Art is the indispensable means for this merging of the individual with the whole.³⁹

Is it that understanding oneself is an “indispensable” benefit that art can provide? I like to believe so. Art can both bring us closer to others and further from ourselves and through this action it may lead us to a different self understanding. With these two possibilities in mind, the other and art as window to “selves” I wonder what the window into another, through art, can tell me of myself?

If the artists look back what do they see? With luck they see someone who knows himself, who wonders what the artist makes of his self. Art has this alone as a truly “instrumental” value: to understand one’s self through art is to understand oneself as my art helps me to understand “myself” through its polyphonic lenses.

Can I convince my reader, more important still, can I convince myself that awareness, appreciation, knowledge and dialogue of “self” as perceived by “myself” is central to the understanding of self? If my education creates a new type of self by my expanding the discourse of self, education in the arts has a central role in that creation. Just as we cannot imagine introducing an educated person who knows nothing of the arts, we cannot imagine introducing a person as educated if she has attempted no deep or critical awareness of her self. Once the self is better understood, the self’s true non-utilitarian needs, rather than needs created by more materialistic ideas of the utility of self, it may become evident and we can choose whether to enter into the discourses of art, education, and the other as individual or collective.

I had created a fundamental problem for myself by including within my performance the notion of a “self” while only engaged in the portion of “myself,” principally as teacher, with which I entered the classroom and this performance: how

³⁹ Ernst Fischer, *The Necessity of Art* (London: Penguin Books, 1959) p. 8.

was I to share that teacher subjectivity the subject of the other, the student. How might that sharing support students in exploring their own subjective and later inter-subjective selves? This became the second point of the hair story as a pedagogic story: the deliberate tangling threads of self, other, subjective knowledge, the subject of sharing, language, literature, technique and performance in order to provide a scaffold from which to sculpt or script an acceptable self. Language is both a medium and a tool for this work.

I would like to further explore a phenomenology of an aspect of consciousness formed by the experience of other-consciousness while looking at both language “acquisition” and the refining of self identity. We certainly have a phenomenological experience of self and of other but why are we so certain that the other also experiences a “self?” Of course, this might just be us assuming parallel experience out of perceived similarity, but this only speculates on a category of experience; it does not explain what that experience is. It seems to me that within the experience of language the intersubjectivity of the notion of self is most clear and most supportable. Our acquisition of language and our refinement of its use over the years of co-habitation with our own identities, is the basis of our intersubjectivity in that self through language communicates with other selves and assumes some commonality of experience.

Few things have been as interesting to me as feeling my mind spin frequently, it seems, beyond my control, around, among and through the ideas of self, language, subjectivity, and intersubjectivity. Each of us might be thought to come to an awareness of these ideas of self in the clouds of thought swirling about our awareness of self from a position in which we see language as something that has an existence and something that has a purpose. We speak and read a language or multiple languages, we learn and have learned a language, or multiple languages; language situates us and identifies us; it communicates our needs; seems to form our thoughts, and fails, although we might wish it would not, to express all that we feel. Language also defines “us” — in both a traditional sense of language definition, and in a discursive sense of placing us within a discourse of self. Language in all its multiple communicative forms shares all of these interplays with intersubjectivity; intersubjectivity is a defining and placing within a discourse.

This is where the pedagogic story involving self may serve the purpose of introducing students to the complexity of more current understanding of language in a discursive sense. I wanted to explore this with my students as I do here in this dissertation. I might, for example, claim that, "I am a self." I can and do claim that I am aware of "selfness" which in turn makes me aware of otherness. My self shares, in much the same way that language and intersubjectivity share points of contact, those same awarenesses that the other self might make it aware of my otherness as a part of its selfness. My experience of self has a significant component that arises from and within phenomena of subjective experience, as does the students experience of self within themselves. But an experience of "self", is almost impossible without a sense of the experience of the "other." self therefore is an intersubjective notion arising from a shared understanding, an interstanding. How do we two subjects create and manage and share this common subjective concept? I wanted students to see that as they are aware of self and of other and we are both aware of this sameness in self and other, that it is within language, particularly a story of self that we create and express the self, the other, and what we share. Other forms of expression share this ability but I was concentrating on constructing narrative in my Language Arts classes even while we explored other forms of discourse.

We, the self and the other manage it, I would suggest, in two ways. First the story of self identity that we write as we experience our lives creates an intersubjectivity between and among selves as language is acquired in childhood because, as Bakhtin proposes, language infected with otherness in a polyglossia and a heteroglossia⁴⁰ That is, the words which we learn to speak and understand come to us both through many voices and iterations of the words as they are spoken — polyglossia, and those voices are different not just in that they are the voices of others, but in that they come from different discourses into ours — heteroglossia. Each word "tastes of the context and contexts in which it has lived its socially charged life; ... [it] is half someone else's"⁴¹ Secondly, our self is also an other both because of the polyglossia and heteroglossia we

⁴⁰ Michael Holquist, "Introduction," *Dialogism. Dialogism: Bakhtin and his World* (London: Routledge, 1990)

⁴¹ M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination* ed. M. Holquist, translated by C. Emerson and M. Holquist. (Austin, University of Texas Press, 1981.) p. 293.

bring to language through being temporal entities, and because of the centrifugal and centripetal⁴² attributes and forces of language as we communicate with the other about our self. We are not the same self who uttered that same sounding word moments, or years, ago and our utterances pull us toward and away from the discourses in which we engage. The pushes and pulls of language seemed to me particularly apropos of a common adolescent practice of coining and recoinng words to create a teen-speak with which to express themselves more "authentically."

Heteroglossia is only one aspect of the nature of the work that Bakhtin undertook which has been brought together under an umbrella term, "dialogism," by Michael Holquist.⁴³ The entire nature of language as an intersubjective meaning-maker and intrasubjective identity-creator seem informed by his greater body of work. I would like to suggest that Bakhtin's work supports, perhaps even demands, a non-representative view of language. A discursive view of how language "means" not only seems more compatible with an intersubjectivity created in language, it also removes a group of difficulties around language as it acts in the intersubjective understanding of the subject.

I, certainly most of us, do not remember hearing our first few words, speaking our first word, but I see Bakhtin in his work in the dialogic nature of language, particularly the notion of heteroglossia, suggesting that those earliest words were already imbued with a sense of other. And those gifts of the other through language are still with us as we speak today, as is a different other, our self, temporally separated from our current sense of self. Heteroglossia is, it seems, an intersubjectivity. It is the place of the self as it seeks to respond to the other at any moment in any place while at the same time it is the recognition that the response is taken from and a part of specific discourse from among the throngs of discourses that surround and penetrate the self and the other.

I see this as an inescapable consequence of the recognition that language carries in its use and reuse, in its discursive nature, the "meanings" awarded to it, and

⁴² from M. Bakhtin "Discourse in the Novel," p. 171. Bakhtin suggest that for every utterance in a language centripetal forces push that utterance toward a language centre, a tradition. For the same utterance there are also centrifugal forces that pull it away from the tradition of the language into the situation of the specific utterance.

⁴³ Holquist, p. 15.

reacted to by it, in that role of intersubjective meaning creator and extender of our understandings. I would like to further this examination with a focus on an example that might address a particular form of intersubjectivity: the subjectivity and intersubjectivity of self in relation, of course, to other but also in relation to the other within.⁴⁴ When I say "me," or speak my name, whether aloud or internally, I say and speak an entire interior and exterior, real, imagined, proposed and yet unthought richness, arising from dialogues.

Reacting to the confrontation between monologism and dialogism,⁴⁵ Bakhtin proposed that all languages, as vibrant parts of the culture in which they are used, are not only tools of communication but also the very memory of the people, the folk, the society and the culture. Bakhtin sees first that I am not the only person who has a voice when I speak, and secondly and those who hear me and who I hear also have a voice in my words. It is from this interplay between "from what words I construct my hair narrative" and "how words are used in the discourse of my literary background" that I will see a new awareness of how my hair narrative tells the story of me.

Bakhtin had proposed in early work that an unreliable perhaps even impossible source for identity lay completely within the subject: an "I-for-Itself" that produces a sense of "uniqueness that is utter."⁴⁶ While I agree that this dangerous sense of uniqueness is almost impossible, I do think that an "I-for-Itself," once it has been formed by interaction with the other, can incorporate new senses of self, refine identity through dialogue — an intersubjective interaction with a temporally separate self — perhaps can even find a hierarchically removed self. The idea of an unreliable "I-for-itself," too, is supportable within Bakhtin's work in his idea that the self never reaches an unchanging

⁴⁴ Here I refer to an idea parallel to the "other within" suggested by Daniel Deardorf in his book *The Other Within: The Genius of Deformity in Myth, Culture & Psyche*. (Berkeley: North Atlantic Books, 2008) Deardorf suggests that deformity creates an otherness from society that allows for a creativity unlike the mainstream. I would like to parallel that in suggesting that the othering that I created for "myself" in seeing myself as outside the mainstream in appearance created an otherness within my self that made the "stepping away" or creating distance for literary analysis less problematic.

⁴⁵ Finn Bostad, Craig Brandist, and Charlotte Faber, eds. *Bakhtinian Perspectives on Language and Culture : Meaning in Language, Art and New Media*. (Gordonsville: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005) p. 50.

⁴⁶ Holquist, p. 165.

state.⁴⁷ Denying the possibility of a completely subjective self would seem to rise naturally from the view that we can never completely know an other because of the nature of the components of discourses, such as word or image as polyglossial and heteroglossial. Nor do we experience or embody experience in identical ways; cannot find the "true" other or "true" self because of those complexities.

Acquisition of Intersubjective Language

So intersubjectivity can be thought of as a "second person" perspective — a sense that one also perceives from the perspective of I and as an other. We are our fellow aesthetic experiencer's "brother." How is this "inter-" of intersubjectivity formed? The attempt to build a connection across the gap between others, which is, as it were, the very substance of human experience, must have a form. To me, Bakhtin's work suggests that language is the form and substance of intersubjectivity. The phenomenon of our individual experiences during discourse is not simply a reflection of one another but a consciousness formed jointly, intersubjectively, by the experiences of one another. There is a phenomenology "within" or "of" thought: the phenomena of sensing and experiencing self and other.

As I understand a discursive view of language, a central idea is that words are not tied to a reality as labels, or even as mirrors of existence but are a kind of existence in and of themselves. Sentences, John Austin implies in *How to Do Things with Words*,⁴⁸ do not describe reality, they create it. A speech act has a meaning but it also performs an action and this is true not only of sentences in which a baby is named or a knight dubbed, but also in more mundane creations of understanding by the creation of a discursive reality.

Treating language as a discourse solves, too, the difficulty a representative understanding of language brings to the use of "I" as a signifier. A discursive view of language can be seen as an invitation to what we might call "teenage" speak. The

⁴⁷ Mikhail Bakhtin, "Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity," 256.

⁴⁸ John Austin, "How to Do things with Words" *The works of J. L. Austin*. [electronic resource]. (Charlottesville: InteLex Corporation, 2000)

adolescent use of language seems, to me as a teacher of the adolescent, a deliberate attempt to exclude adults around them. Bakhtin's idea of the centripetal utterance of the teenager inevitably pulling toward the traditions of the adult language while at the same time providing a centrifugal pull into new utterances, new uses for the language. A discursive notion of language invites a legitimacy to this inclusion of self and exclusion of certain others.

Roman Jakobson, building on and refining the work of Saussure in *Course in General Linguistics*, sees that pronouns, in particular those referring to self and other such as "I," "me," "you," or "they" have no "signified." None of those words is a reference to a category of objects worthy of a label the way "dog" may be thought to be. It is no good, in Jakobson's view,⁴⁹ to solve this difficulty by saying that, as pronouns, they are replacing nouns, since any noun they might be thought to be replacing—"I" replacing "Marlowe" when I speak—cannot hold its referent during a dialogue because you might also say "I" and "I" no longer can be replacing "Marlowe."

The role of "I" and "me" and "you" in a discussion is to indicate the position of the speaker in a dialogue and not the identity of the noun being replaced. In *Dialogism* Holquist proposes:

In Jakobson's suggestive phrase, "I" is a "shifter" because it moves the center of discourse from one speaking subject to another: its emptiness is the no man's land in which subjects can exchange the lease they hold on all of language by virtue of saying "I." When a particular person utters that word, he or she fills "I" with meaning by providing the central point needed to calibrate all further time and space discriminations: "I" is the invisible ground of all other indices in language, the benchmark to which all its spatial operations are referred, and the Greenwich mean by which all its time distinctions are calibrated.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Roman Jakobson, *Shifters, Verbal Categories and the Russian Verb*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957) p. 387.

⁵⁰ Holquist, p. 23.

But that difficulty only comes to the fore if you expect words, specifically pronouns, to be referential. I would suggest that in a discursive view of language, "I" does not "shift," or perhaps it would be more correct to say that "I" shifts no more than "dog" or any other words as they are used in a particular discourse. Meanings are situated and contextualized. In a discussion with a chemist, "mass" will have a very different mutually understood role in the dialogue than it might in conversation with a priest. In the former discussion, "mass" joins into an interstanding around properties of matter, while in the latter "mass" takes on a ceremonial mantle. By a discursive theory of language "I" does not need to shift meanings; it only needs be placed in a discourse, a context in which its meaning is independent of a fixed referent. Introducing this idea of discourse in the meaning of language may free the adolescent author from some of the externally imposed ideas of better and best language.

The difficulty in determining the referent for "I" as outlined by Jakobson in *Shifters, Verbal Categories and the Russian Verb*, also would not exist in an internal sense of I as a self. The referent would be fixed. Except that, of course, the self isn't fixed. I am as situated and externally impacted today as I was twenty years ago. "I" is iterable in Derrida's sense that every use of that word in a new place or situation, alters its meaning.⁵¹ Can a dialogic or discursive view of self cast any light on internal understanding? I think it can. Just as Mikhail Bakhtin's heteroglossia and polyglossia remind us of the richness and complexity of the language with which we speak to others, these ideas also add that same complexity to our internal dialogue with our current, past and future self.

Bakhtin's idea of heteroglossia, the blending of concepts among languages and uses, allows my use of the word "I" or "me" to carry with it your use, and millions of other speakers' use, of those two pronouns; a polyglossia, the many voices having expressed those concepts as well as when expressed in other languages. It seems safe to suggest that every speaker has used a language reference to self and when I speak the word "I" its flavour is of you, my grandmother, Abraham Lincoln, The Great Khan, and Socrates.

⁵¹ see Jacques Derrida, *On Grammatology*. trans. G. C. Spivak. (Baltimore : Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998.)

As importantly, the word "I" also exists in its expression as a contributor to my students' current use of it, tinted with all that it has gained in all of its previous uses by me. In a very real sense, then, when I say "I" or think "I", I am in discourse with myself in all of my past existence, as well as all others who have used, I and I set up the parameters of the discourses, internal and external, that will involve me in the future. This understanding of this sort of limited personalization of language, I hoped, might allow adolescent authors with whom I worked to subject themselves to less internalized criticism; that they might have a better understanding of self with which to claim value for themselves. "This is me; I speak in the word I use."

Heteroglossia provides the citational character of references to self to bridge the gap between me as a subject, and you as a subject. I understand that your use of the word "I" and mine are both iterations, and yet we understand the intersubjective nature of the phenomena we both share as "I"s. And while you and I may not share a name, we can be reasonably confident that your reference to yourself in the use of your name and my reference to myself with the use of my name, share subjective points of contact or similarity.

Bakhtin saw any "speech act" as an act of authorship,⁵² really as an act of co-authorship. Just as an author creates and broadcasts a literary work, by speaking we create and broadcast our ideas into the intersubjective realm of discourse. As authors we are creators and readers of the self we write. We have become authors because we first became subjects and became subjects by being objects. So the heteroglossia of our speech carries with it both our subjective and objective attributes as selves. This is of central importance to teachers, particularly those who teach Language Arts.⁵³

But if we are authors, speaking for ourselves, how can we also be co-authors with the other as we present ourselves? Co-authorship of reader and author in creation

⁵² Greg Nielsen, *The Norms of Answerability: Social Theory Between Bakhtin and Habermas*. (New York, State University of New York Press, 2002) p. 64.

⁵³ I feel that it is arguable that all teachers are teachers of Language Arts because of the centrality of language in the sharing of most experience in the classroom.

of the meaning of literary works is a common notion in post-structuralist literary theory.⁵⁴ And in the authoring with ourselves we enter a different type of co-authoring as distant from fellow composers as a reader might be from this author. I would suggest that by Bakhtin's argument we may become co-authors, not just with our readers but also with those we have read in the past. Heteroglossia and polyglossia, and the iterability of past statements, make us so. We co-author with all those whose language we use to speak, and with our selves as we once existed, and our other who allowed and helped us to be. We co-author with our past and future selves. This awareness of the nature of the language with which we write and speak of ourselves, is the point of contact between student author and teacher, student author and fellow student, student author, "self" and "myself."

If we are as much characters in the script written by others as we are in the script written by ourselves, who are we to believe when we make a knowledge claim about our selves? For the sometimes egocentric adolescent author, this might be a very important question. If I say, "I am a generous person" do I write that characteristic into "myself" or even my "self"? Has another written it into me with me and the joint document now makes it the truth? Is there an intersubjective understanding, an interstanding that gives "sense" to that statement that I am generous? It is of course quite possible that I am not a generous person within a discourse involving myself and others so the subjective initial statement requires co-authoring through experience of an act of generosity or a co-editing of a narrative I write of my generosity. The co-editing of that narrative, provided its veracity is not assumed and provided that the co-editors are aware of some of the assumptions they make, will still be a place of power distribution.

Treating language as discourse challenges the simplistic portrayal of language as neutral medium, acknowledges the meaning and force of

⁵⁴ Niall Lucy, *Post Modern Literary Theory: An Introduction*. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1997) pp 75-77.

what is linguistically absent as well as what is present, and allows for an analysis of the workings of power through language."⁵⁵

Claudia Ruitenberg reminds us of the inherent power in language precisely because it is not a simple representative communication between subjects.

A discursive view of language allows for an understanding of the workings of power through language.... a conception of power not as held by individuals, but as present in and distributed through language and social institutions.⁵⁶

Some aspects of the power relationships in the use language are found in concepts explored in Bakhtin's work that I have been referring to here. The insight into power differentials⁵⁷ that Bakhtin's work addresses concern the centrifugal and centripetal attributes of discourse. These concepts can help us reconcile the hierarchal potentials in co-authorship within the shared authorship of intersubjectivity. In language in its discursive frame, the idea of power has a special significance amplified when the discourse turns to self.

There is a power differential in any conversation: a pulling in, centripetal, and a pulling out, centrifugal. Language is not just the simple relationship of speaker and listener, or a relationship created by social roles, it is a hierarchy of power as fluid as the use of personal pronouns in discourse. A speaker feels, in the act of speech a power stemming from the veracity of representation of thought contained within the words spoken. If I say, "I disagree," I assert a statement that relies on my inner state of disagreement and I am in a position to believe that at that moment I speak with greater authority about my internal state than any other could muster. I pull you centripetally toward my understanding, my self, and my understanding of you as other. By the same token my use of the pronoun "I" is more accurate, more authoritative in its centrifugal

⁵⁵ Claudia Ruitenberg, "Check Your Language! Political Correctness, Censorship, and Performativity in Education," ed. C. Higgins, *Philosophy of Education 2004* (pp. 37-45) (Urbana: Philosophy of Education Society, 2004) p. 23.

⁵⁶ Ruitenberg, p. 41.

⁵⁷ Bakhtin, "Discourse in the Novel." p. 352.

power, when I utter it than any thought you can bring to bear on the subject. You have no power to contradict; saying, "you aren't 'I'" is as nonsensical as it is truthful. My pedagogic story, "The Hairy Narrative," relies heavily on this concept. Part of its "lesson," I hope, is that the intensely felt personal has a reality that trumps denial by the other, that the experience of constructing the personal narrative gives, to my adolescent students, agency to their self.

This means that an understanding all of the potential aspects of the felt truth of the story are more valuable, accurate, and powerful as they exist in my mind and in some form in the minds of my reader. The connection between the language of self and the reading of the other can be seen here to be aiding and expanding, in that it allows the subjects to arrive to their own places in the discourse, and the connection can also be seen to be impeding or limiting in that it prevents non-hierarchical interchange. As an author of "myself" I might like to believe I get the final and best word, and if I put energy into that potentially flawed authorship via a literary analysis, I can pretend to get the final word twice. More importantly I spend more time with my own work, and when "one spends even more time in this presence of the relationship, observing as the subject changes and unfolds" deepens awareness.⁵⁸ Notwithstanding, my final word need not carry the same notions for my reader as it does for me. The inability to dictate representational meaning to the other is another understanding which I would like to reveal to my adolescent students.

The hair performance was an opportunity to share my subjectivity with students as well as to establish an atmosphere in which such sharing could be done both supportively and honestly. The sharing of the hair story was an invitation into the discourse of selves and an interstanding of intersubjectivity through language.

In the tradition of literary writers I will use stories to demonstrate the need for literary analysis of our own work as educational researchers. I can remember, with what seems a stunning clarity, the exact moment that I decided to study literature. That moment serves as both a launching point and a touch stone for my career as a student,

⁵⁸ Scott, p. 264.

as an educator, and even as author of this dissertation. As an English major and English Language Arts teacher I became familiar with the notions, procedures, and promises as applied to fiction in the modern and later post-modern tradition of literary critique or close reading. This way of communing with story has features with which many English majors of my generation are probably familiar from early exposure in the Western education system.

Reading literature through the lens of literary analysis informed by literary theory and reinforced by English teachers is standard practice in the K-12 school system. I suspect most of the concepts involved in examination of literary writing are sickeningly familiar to schoolchildren raised in the traditions of educational practice as practiced in British Columbia. Or at least stomach turning and overdone if any of the comments I was bombarded with as an English teacher are to be believed. "What? We have to compare and contrast metaphor and simile again?" However, I have found that these techniques may also be useful in considering the exploration of stories that have become part of the larger picture of narrative inquiry. "Often people stop at the first telling of the story (albeit compelling) and say that that is their research. But for me, it is just the starting point."⁵⁹ The techniques of close reading and literary analysis are the methods for understanding literary writing that I explore and develop in this dissertation to enhance narrative as research.

Literary analysis was a way of encountering the world that I, unlike many of the secondary students I was later to teach, was to particularly enjoy. I was "a reader" and when I was in the tenth grade my English teacher, Ms. Ruth, discussed the plot advancement the author imbues in a liver-coloured dog in *To Kill a Mockingbird*.⁶⁰ Our teacher asked: "What colour is liver?" I can feel my puzzlement still. This was a typical teacher question in the guess-what-I-want-you-to-say mode, but it wasn't also of the it-is-there-on-the-page-find-it sort. I was not a brave student, rarely in Grade 10 ever

⁶⁰ In the book *Atticus Finch*, a lawyer defending a black man accused of rape, shoots a rabid dog, a "town pet" and prevents injury to the innocent. The suggestion is that Atticus will destroy the "town pet" of racism in the trial to follow. Appendix 1 is the passage from *To Kill a Mockingbird* referred to in this chapter.

speaking up in class, my hair had seen to that,⁶¹ but no one else was answering and this was one area, the appearances of food, in which I felt confident.⁶² I was also quite smitten by this teacher: she was young, very pretty and very, very respectful of us as learners. I wanted to please her and so I answered "sort of a red brown when it's raw but black brown when it's cooked." "Yes," she replied, and addressing the class as a whole again, "And, what colour are the negroes⁶³ in the town?"

In the time she gave the class to process for answers I found one: The black people in Maycomb were the same colour as liver and the same colour as the dog. Why? Why had Harper Lee done this? I was already consciously aware of the constructed nature of fiction and I know that authors put things in that were not accidents, like end-rhymes in poems, and characters in stories with names that might have two meanings, but this was different. Did Harper Lee really figure that out in advance? Was she so smart that she planned to have a rabid dog of just the correct colour appear just so Atticus Finch could shoot it? "It must be so," I remember thinking.

Ms. Ruth, assuming that no one had come to an idea they were willing to share, filled it in for us. "The dog and the people against whom the whites of Maycomb are so prejudiced are the same colour and Atticus is going to 'put down' that prejudice which is so dangerous just as he puts down this dangerous dog — 'the pet of Maycomb.'" I don't know if I would have moved beyond my first revelation to this astounding idea on my own, but it did not matter. I "left" class; listening no more but staring back at the pages looking for more connections: the black man accused of rape is Tom and the dog's name is Tim; the dog is pulled by an invisible force toward the children just like the prejudice in the town is being pulled toward these children; Jem and Scout's father is going to protect

⁶¹ Please see "The Hair Narrative" prose poem for insights into the extent to which my shyness and feelings about my relationship with my hair and insecurities about my appearance. Lines 148 - 154 for example

⁶² Not part of "The Hair Narrative" is a life-long passion for cooking and experimentation in the kitchen.

⁶³ In 1974, the word negro, as I remember it, at least in my household and school classrooms, was still in polite use.

them from both dog bite and rabid town prejudice. I was elated.⁶⁴ I made the decision very consciously to do this kind of thing forever. So far, forty-four years, so good.

I fell in love with the idea of seeing what was behind and within the words, of seeing how they work together, of author intention and reader response. This was my first conscious exposure to the intriguing waters that now swirl about me in my own narrative inquiry. I was a secondary, and undergraduate English teacher for many years and that love of the promise of the fluid exploration of literary writing never left me. When introduced to the notion of narrative inquiry while reading Clandinin and Connelly's *Narrative Inquiry: Experience and Story in Qualitative Research*, I attempted to bring into my own narrative inquiry those aspects of literary criticism and literary analysis, close reading, figurative language and soundscapes which I continue to find so fascinating.

As I read most narrative inquiries, and the literature surrounding them, it struck me that some of the greatest richness of the figurative use of language within the stories that are studied is either taken for granted and goes unmentioned, or remains unnoticed. Thus when I turned to examine my own narrative, it became important to me to introduce ideas in literary criticism into my inquiry. While "narratives do signify a knot, a matrix of issues, a professional development challenge. Narrative is a starting point for authentic research, ... just telling or writing stories is not narrative research."⁶⁵ Like the nuances of the language with which we write, the potentially deeper waters of the language of narration and story telling may be overlooked in narrative inquiry if researchers attend to their narratives within a limited view that sees language as representative and used chiefly metaphorically, and symbolically, in narrative inquiry. Although, there are certainly many qualitative researchers who are fully aware of the language of narration and performance, which they use to advantage, the use of literary analysis to delve into the research of narratives is not explicitly identified.

⁶⁴ I feel very fortunate to have worked on a British Columbia Ministry of Education project with Ms. Ruth many years later, in her last year before retirement. When I told her she had been my English teacher 29 years earlier she said, "I am surprised you remember me." I told her that I remembered the exact moment when I decided to study literature then recounted this tale. She expressed gratitude and I felt fortunate to have been able to thank a person who had so enriched my life.

⁶⁵ L. Fowler, p.2.

Beyond metaphor and symbolism, what of rhyme and rhythm? What of assonance and consonance? What of hyperbole? Metonymy? Zeugma? Anastrophe? Anthimeria?⁶⁶ These terms, some familiar to my readers, some not, are a part of a discourse about the effects of language as written and spoken, but the effects are as potential and realizable for those who can identify such terms as well as for those who have not been exposed to all of these ideas. Further, these terms, as normally applied, pretend to represent; yet, they are the stuff of a rich performative discourse, a dance of language around, between, through ideas, true interstandings⁶⁷ among those who engage professionally and otherwise with literature. I would seek to add to this rich tradition some ideas from close reading; ideas which will give additional insight into the strategies, techniques, and play of language. There is phenomenological insight, or set of insights accessible, which I would like to explore later in chapters six and seven as I seek the theoretical underpinnings of my use of literary analysis within narrative inquiry.

Literary analysis, like close reading, is an attentiveness to the text, in all the vast post modern sense of text as word, situation, language, illustration, marginalia, etc. The term "text" can take on this larger role through a post-structuralist understanding derived from the work of Ferdinand de Saussure and Jacques Derrida. De Saussure states in *Course in General Linguistics* that "in language there are only differences"⁶⁸ because the relationship between signifier and signified is arbitrary.⁶⁹ Derrida builds on the idea that there are only differences to claim that a signifier has meaning only within a specific discourse. It is the differences among words that allow them to exist and perform their

⁶⁶ For the benefit of readers some definitions: assonance: the close repetition of vowel sounds; consonance: the close repetition of consonant sounds; hyperbole: exaggeration to achieve a particular effect; metonymy: a replacing of the name of an object with a reference to something associated with that object; zeugma: the use of a single verb for two subjects, particularly when the verb is a non-standard but effective fit for one of subjects. anastrophe: the disruption of standard word order to achieve a specific effect; anthimeria: the use of a word as a different part of speech that standard usage would dictate.

⁶⁷ See Chapter 2 for a discussion of this term.

⁶⁸ Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*. Roy Harris (trans.) (London : Duckworth, 1983.) p. 116.

⁶⁹ Signifier, here, is the written or spoken word and signified the concept arbitrarily assigned to that signifier. The word "child" in no way resembles any child in sound or appearance but in the discourse of education what is signified by the word "child" is understood to mean a human being of some quasi-definable but not certain age. In the discourse of Canadian law, however, a child is a person under the age of sixteen.

roles in a discourse. For de Saussure a language system is a series of differences both in sounds and ideas. It might be more clear if we imagined an language without differences, ridiculously only one word and one idea. Derrida proposed that since each use of a word, even within the same discourse was also different, that language was only *différance* (a word he coined to express this idea.)

Derrida claims that all uses of language, whether spoken, drawn, gestured, or expressed in any other form, are writing because language functions as a system of differences.⁷⁰ That all forms of communication, because they function within a system, can be viewed globally as text is important for the understanding of my work in this dissertation, full, as it is, with words, experiences, recollections, retellings and silly line drawings of the heads of myself and others. For Derrida, because writing is at the heart of these communications, "there is nothing outside of the text."⁷¹ Text does not, according to Derrida, refer to the tangible printed character only of books and cannot, as a result, have any one author. The text is co-authored by writer, reader, and all others who are a part of the system of the discourse. I use Derrida's idea of the meaning of text as a reminder of the need for a more flexible yet more closely attentive examination of the text which form "The Hair Narrative."

Literary analysis, thus informed by Derrida, calls for careful and consistent reading, and for the sustained interpretation of a text that, while the interpretation may stray from what is on the printed page, uses the textual as the final arbiter of what "The Hair Narrative" contains and what meanings the narrative will reveal within the discourse of its analysis. The emphasis in literary analysis is on the written, the word choice, sounds, rhythms, syntax, spacing, and appearance of the writing, which composes the document. Literary analysis, as a close reading, concentrates on the specific concrete phenomena of the text co-create interstanding of what the text includes and conveys to the reader/analyzer.

⁷⁰ J. Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, Alan Bass (trans.), (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978). Pp. 220-225.

⁷¹ J. Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, p. 158.

This technique of attentiveness was written of in the 1920s by Ivor Richards of Cambridge University's Magdalen College.⁷² Richards, as I had done in my experiment with the Jennifer VII poem (see pages 60 - 63), distributed verse pieces to students without author's names or other situating information. His intention was to push students toward an attentiveness to the poetic text rather than the general milieu from which the poem arose or was composed. In *Principles of Literary Criticism* and *Practical Criticism: A Study of Literary Judgment*⁷³ Richards reports that

We cannot legitimately judge [the author of a poem's] means by external standards (such as accuracy of fact or logical coherence), Literary analysis, like close reading, is an attentiveness to the text, in all the vast post modern sense of text as word, situation, language, illustration, marginalia, etc. The term "text" can take on this larger role through a post-structuralist understanding derived from the work of Ferdinand de Saussure and Jacques Derrida. De Saussure states in *Course in General Linguistics* that "in language there are only differences"⁷⁴ because the relationship between signifier and signified is arbitrary. Derrida builds on the idea that there are only differences to claim that a signifier has meaning only within the a discourse." Derrida claims that all uses of language, whether spoken, drawn, gestured, or expressed in any other form, are writing because language functions as a system of differences.⁷⁵ That all forms of communication, because they function within a system, can be viewed globally as text is important for the understanding of my work in this dissertation, full, as it is, with words, experiences, recollections, retellings and silly line drawings of the heads of myself and others. For Derrida, because writing is at the heart of these communications, "there is nothing outside of the text."⁷⁶ Text does not, according to Derrida, refer to the tangible printed character only of books and cannot, as a result, have any authors. The text is co-authored by writer, reader, and all others who are a part of the system of the discourse. I

⁷² Particularly in *The Principles of Literary Criticism*. (London: Kegan Paul, 1924) and *Practical Criticism: A Study of Literary Judgment* (London: Kegan Paul, 1930)

⁷³ Ivor Richards *The Principles of Literary Criticism*. (London: Kegan Paul, 1924)

⁷⁴ Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*. Roy Harris (trans.) (London : Duckworth, 1983.) p. 116.

⁷⁵ J. Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, Alan Bass (trans.), (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978). Pp. 220-225.

⁷⁶ J. Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, p. 158.

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Literary analysis concentrates on the form, and the meanings that contribute or arise from the form of the text. While this analysis is sometimes conducted in English Language Arts classes as though the literary work exists in isolation, when I engage with my students in literary analysis, I do so only to concentrate on the technique. As the techniques of close reading become more familiar to students, other theories of how texts gain meaning take their place alongside literary analysis in my classroom. "Reader Response," as outlined by Stanley Fish in *Is there a Text in this Class?*⁷⁸ and in his later work, is yet another literary theory which works well in the post-structuralist world of today's literature classroom.

Reader response focuses on the receiver of the text. The emphasis for the "interpretive communities" of readers, such as a group of students in the classroom, is placed on the task of the reader to actively construct texts through reference to his or her own experiences and perspectives rather than passively consume them. Sometimes

⁷⁷ Ivor Richards *The Principles of Literary Criticism*. (London: Kegan Paul, 1924) p. 205.

⁷⁸ Stanley Fish, *Is There a Text in This Class: The Authority of Interpretive Communities* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980)

reader response is seen to suggest that students make meanings for texts based on personal or culturally centered reasons while actually ignoring the construction of the text itself. Reader response is often critiqued as an "anything goes" method of dealing with texts if one is to believe the muttered complaints among some groups of English teachers at conferences I have attended.

However, I do not consider reader response as a literary theory at odds with the practice of close reading. Terry Eagleton, whose work I use to back my claim that literary analysis remains of importance as a means of coming to richer understandings of a text, supports the idea that literary criticism and close reading are compatible. He extorts teachers of Language Arts to engage in literary criticism.

The truth is that quite a few teachers of literature nowadays do not practice literary criticism either, since they, in turn, were never taught to do so.

This charge may seem pretty rich coming as it does from the literary theorist. Wasn't it literary theory, with all its soulless abstractions and vacuous generalities, which destroyed the habit of close reading in the first place? I have pointed out elsewhere that this is one of the great myths or unexamined clichés of contemporary critical debate. ... The truth is that almost all major literary theorists engage in scrupulously close reading.⁷⁹

I consider the traditional ideas of literary analysis as not only compatible with but even supplementary to reader response theory. I, and I think most of my students have an immediate and very personal response to a text on first encounter. That response is legitimate within the context of our experience and perspectives. It often guides our understandings. Literary analysis, rather than denying the value of initial reader response looks for ways to bolster its veracity. Although, literary analysis may also serve to mitigate or even lead to a rejection of that initial response.

⁷⁹ Terry Eagleton, *How to Read a Poem* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2007) p. 1-2.

Certainly those who make a career engaging academic study of written ideas make a great deal of effort to arrive at considerable, constantly challenged and renegotiated insights and confirm the power of language used by those skilled in its manipulation in the aesthetics of the world of poetry and prose. Those exploring story and engaging in narrative inquiry in educational research may or may not, consciously, unconsciously, with guidance, or on their own, include figurative language which speaks as powerfully and as clearly as the denotative structures of the words that they use. I hope to demonstrate that some of the power in narrative inquiry that enriches its already powerful ability to provide insights will be enhanced by a new set of lenses brought into the examination of personal stories. I will use an example from my own writing, principally because I can speak to the knowledge and ignorance with which it was composed and insights derived through later examination of literary notions. The narrative of the literary analysis of my own verse undertaken with a secondary school English class, which is explored in the following chapter contains within it a realization of "myself" as well as educational thread. The arrival at the epoché of the phenomenological that might provide space for this exploration also arrives in this incident.

The Spectator of Self

As Maturana and Varela state, there is no "observer."⁸⁰ I am the bootstrapping space defined by an autopoietic system ... [I am] self-contained and cannot be described by using dimensions that define another space. When [I] refer to [my] interactions with a concrete autopoietic system, ... [I] project this system on the space of [my] manipulations and make a description of this projection.⁸¹

I can no more watch myself being the one who watched myself than I can divorce myself from the story I write in "The Hair Narrative." Autoethnography, autobiography, narrative

⁸⁰ Maturana and Varela, p. 78.

⁸¹ Maturana and Varela, p. 89.

as ways of inquiry are intertwined with the vagaries of memory and the abilities and inabilities of story telling.

My students experience the "self"-as-teacher; I often share the "self"-as-reflective practitioner with them. "Why do you think I would change what I am doing with you from what I did with you last class?" "I considered how things went last year and was worried that 'learning that' had eclipsed 'learning 'how.'"

However, when the reflection came close to inquiring into "self"-as-teacher, self-as-reflective teacher and self-as-inquirer rarely spoke to one another. I was trained as a scientist, analytic philosopher, and teacher to see research as clinical, detached; while I am aware that the distinction is laughably naïve and artificial, that distinction had pushed the conversation between "myself" into a shadow world of rarely perceived and virtually never acknowledged interactions. Neither can I escape "myself"-as-artist-of-self which is where the gap between my self-as-teacher and "myself," may be particularly important.

This gap, of which I am reminded to be mindful by London Underground signs⁸² and announcements, between the outwardly presented stable platform of teacher and the standing train car of inner self critique, can be explored in the performance of my hair story. Like the gap between car and siding in the Charring Cross Station⁸³ the gap requires no great leap to cross. But like that gap, the narrative contains the tenuous suggestion of a trip, a stumbling while crossing between the two aspects "myself" and my "self" that might cause injury, or at least a blush of embarrassment as I imagine the grin of others at my clumsiness. It might be suggested that it would become the falling into the hole, the spinning, tumbling descent of many literary characters like Alice down her well,⁸⁴ into "myself." However, I do not like to see "myself" so much as one who

⁸² In the London mass transit system, the Underground, "Mind the Gap" signs remind boarding or disembarking passengers that the space between the still train and the platform may be large enough to cause missteps and injury.

⁸³ A station in the London Underground which, when I last visited there, had some of the largest gaps between train and platform that I have experienced.

⁸⁴ "Alice had not a moment to think about stopping herself before she found herself falling down a very deep well. Either the well was very deep, or she fell very slowly, for she had plenty of time as she went down to look about her and to wonder what was going to happen next." from Lewis Carrol Alice in Wonderland. <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/11/11-h/11-h.htm>. No page numbers.

creates a "self" brave enough or foolhardy enough to compare "myself" with either Alice of the tumble into Wonderland or Harry Potter of the rush into a train station pillar.⁸⁵ I am not a Huck Finn⁸⁶ nor am I a Holden Caulfield.⁸⁷ I am much more a Josef K who "was arrested [by self realization] one morning without having done anything wrong."⁸⁸

The relationship of my "self"-as-teacher and "myself"-as-artist-of-self⁸⁹ is an interesting, varied, recreated, and recreating and fluid discourse, one well worth research and exploration, but first I feel a need to explore "myself's" relationship with "myself"-as-artist-of-self. This is not a reference to Marlowe as a sculptor or guerrilla artist performer but a reference to Marlowe as one who creates the aesthetic that he wears while in contact with the world. Like Harold Pearce, "I am reminded of Heidegger's idea of "being in" and "dwelling in" as an essential research stance that seeks to establish our 'primal oneness'."⁹⁰ "Myself" is where I live, my "self" is what colour I paint my shutters and how often I cut my lawn or my hair. And like Pearce, I see the exploration of self as a natural outcome of the Heideggerian "dwelling in" myself that I already do. I am "myself." I live in and separate "myself" from my "self". My "self" is a reality that I like to assume is created by others with my more than willing and sometimes unwilling assistance. As with the sculptures⁹¹ I create from inanimate objects, I try to force a certain perception out into the universe and into the other. As I, as an artist-of-"self", try to shape my "self", however, the brush and palette knife and potter's

⁸⁵ In J.K. Rowlings' *Harry Potter* series the main character, Harry Potter, must trust Mrs. Weasley and run at an apparently solid railway pillar in order to reach a magical platform. see J. K. Rowlings *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, (New York: Scholastic, 1999) Chapter 6.

⁸⁶ In Mark Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Finn bravely runs away from the home of his alcoholic father to begin the adventures that comprise most of the book. see Mark Twain, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (New York: Random House, 1996) Chapter 7.

⁸⁷ Holden Caulfield is the inexperienced but resentful narrator of *Catcher in the Rye* who sets off to explore New York City alone. see J. D. Salinger, *The Catcher in the Rye*. (Boston: Little Brown, 1957) Chapter 7.

⁸⁸ Franz Kafka, *The Trial*, trans. Idris Parry. (London, Penguin Books, 1994) p. 1.

⁸⁹ Here I continue the earlier description of a "myself" as an almost completely internal entity artificially held distinct from the external self who is presented to students in my role as teacher, and the inner "myself" who decorates that canvas for his audience.

⁹⁰ Harold Pearce, "Praxis in Perspective," *a/r/tography*. Rita Erwin and Alex de Cosson eds. (Vancouver: Pacific Education Press, 2004) p. 185.

⁹¹ One art form with which I engage is multimedia sculpture. see Marlowe Irvine "The Broken Series" *in situ*. See footnote 3.

rib of my work are frustrated by the unworkability or resistance of the media itself. My "self" is only so responsive to "myself's" efforts to shape and colour it, and the other has a role in the shaping and colouring his or her perception and reception of my efforts.

The "myself"-as-artist-of-self, who encapsulates both the perception of my presence as a work of art commissioned and presented to others by me and through my understanding of the perception of what I have managed to present is something I live with and live within. I am a Mona Lisa and a war sketch, a radio play and a scentscape. The extent to which "myself"-as-artist-of-self is represented in this canvas of "self" is as complex as any artwork, co-created by myself and my spectators continuing Rancière 's usage.⁹² I shape and frame a canvas that I inhabit.

The Desire of Self

Why? What of the creation of an appearance of self for a teacher? I can remember teachers I have had by their appearance. Ms. Rollins⁹³ was peasant dresses and flowing dark hair. You knew at a glance that she and her hippie style were going to push your ideas of the *status quo*. Mr. Lewis was as towering and strict as his military haircut and pressed and starched shirts. Mrs Elliot and Mr Steele were too boring to bother with; just look at them.

Since I can remember dismissing or embracing teachers I had in any context almost immediately at their appearance what of my own? A principal once told me I was overdressed in a vest, jacket and tie, which made me "look like a banker." There are instances, of course, of teachers being told to avoid wearing certain clothing or types of clothing: plunging necklines or too short shorts criticized, one young teacher being asked to keep her tattooed arms covered, another told that the slogan on his shirt might not be "appropriate." But these are instances regarding perceived social and educational appearances and not explorations of the "teacher look" from within a considered

⁹² see footnote 2.

⁹³ The names of all of the "others" here and throughout are replacements of labels. The person remains in my memories and I share a label only to move the memory into a discourse with my reader.

aesthetic of the teacher. I wonder how many others were ever told that they looked too much, or not enough, the part of teacher. I wonder how many of us think we look too much, or not enough the part we want to play for the others who surround us; how much are we worried about our costume whatever role we are about to play? The critic's voices that shape the artist's work are very different from the studied voices of the experienced theatre or art spectator.

My experience and research in teacher education persuades me that the academic community creates much work for and about teaching and nearly forgets the teacher as an artist/co-creator of her own appearance. I am unsure as to how I might rectify this gap as what I do examine about the teacher and the appearance of teacher here is firmly and solely situated within those experiences that I perceive to be my own. But throughout my study of education, my work in the field of teaching and teacher-training, through thirty years of thinking about teachers, I have never seen substantive writing about the aesthetics of the appearance of the teacher. More recently, the ability to search millions of bits of text electronically has returned little more. Even a highly skilled researcher in educational literature to whom I have had access for many years has been unable to surface much of note in this area. Work is done in the realms of psychology and sociology on the reactions of children to the appearances of adults, or the reaction of adults to one another, but little, it seems, has been written in current academic work about the art of creating a public self and one's own reaction to that process.⁹⁴

Who creates so much work for and about teaching and forgets the teacher as an artist/co-creator of her own appearance? I was in Albi in France eight years ago. Albi has within the town boundaries both a cathedral and, in the former bishop's residence, a Toulouse-Lautrec museum. The cathedral at Albi is at once an imposing structure and a reminder of the power of architecture to affect the body and spirit of the viewer. Externally, the massive church looks far more like a red-brick fortress to crush forever

⁹⁴ One exception may be *Not just any Dress; Narratives of Memory, Body, and Identity* Sandra Weber and Claudia Mitchell (eds.) (New York: Peter Lang, 2004.) Though the stories and verses of the book do not specifically focus on teacher appearance, rather they address the ideas of the social and cultural implications of particular forms of dress for women, some of the authors are educators.

the Cathar heresy through visual statement than the elegant structure designed to glorify God described in the tourist pamphlet available at the door. The Lautrec museum contains, within its collection on display, the school boy Lautrec's dictionary; its margins used as a sketch book. Toulouse-Lautrec's childhood doodles remind us of the personhood of an artist and the intimacy of contact that can come within the arts. I feel, note that I do not feel it is necessarily authentic, when I am in the presence of the work of a single artist that I share something of his or her self — that public bit that the artist wished me to see. I feel invited by a visual artist to be a spectator with her. I see a contrast in these two forms of expression: the cathedral is a statement by Ozymandius⁹⁵, the doodle is the poet's heart. This is an important separation. A separation equally important, to me, is that Lautrec added his misshapen squat self to some of his work. The inclusion of his own image tells me at once that he knew how he appeared to others and that he had statements to make about that appearance.

When the architect has created an art happening that is my viewing of the cathedral, I am the spectator of a belief in the arts as an expression of form married to function. The architect-as-artist lets his work be a signature to stand for him in absence. As Derrida has pointed out the signature makes the signer redundant.⁹⁶ A doodle behaves in the same way, standing for Lautrec in his. The hand that held the pencil drew curves on a page but the spectator creates the artist and his art anew while viewing it.

Does my appearance make me, like Derrida's signature, redundant? Does the way I look, in standing between my "self" and my spectator, make whoever I am irrelevant? To many, to most, that must be true. The view of my physical appearance replaces "me."⁹⁷ I am a body travelling down a street or standing in front of a classroom. Even to me the apparition that looks back from the mirror is only a utilitarian shell that is shaved or directs the insertion of contact lenses not my "myself" at all. And when I write my description, my hair history, I add more distance and a different sort of specificity to

⁹⁵ Like Shelley's Ozymandius the reasons for us to "Look my works, ye [Cathars], and despair" are long since covered by the dust of history.

⁹⁶ Jacques Derrida. *Of Grammatology*. p. 49.

⁹⁷ Here "me" replaces all of the complexities of "myself."

the signature that replaces the signer.⁹⁸ Reading my hair story without a tool or strategy to better understand the pen strokes leaves me only seeing a reflection without providing perspective giving tools for greater understanding.

I see others through their art/performance of "self"; I cannot seem to not engage in that practice. Art's expressive quality is at the heart of my understanding of the young Toulouse-Lautrec, or the deceased architect of the cathedral at Albi. Wilde⁹⁹, Dewey,¹⁰⁰ Croce¹⁰¹ and Hospers¹⁰² revel in the idea that art is above all else, the embodied expression of the spirit and mind of the artist. As Liotard said of painting: "[she] can persuade through the most evident falsehoods that she is pure truth,"¹⁰³ and this holds particularly true for understanding others through their created work of self-look Lacan's "gaze."¹⁰⁴ The understanding is the "ringing true" of an artwork of the individual as the work corresponds to the viewer's understanding of self-as-artist-of-self that is the issue. "Maxine Greene says that art can't change anything, but it can change people, who can change things."¹⁰⁵

I have convinced myself that I believe that I understand myself better now than I did in my "self aware" youth; this is not surprising given the length of time I and I have lived together. Perhaps some of this increased awareness of the nature of "myself" and

⁹⁸ Jacques Derrida, "Signature, Event, Context," *Limited Inc.* trans S. Weber and J. Melman. (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1988) pp.1 - 24.

⁹⁹ Oscar Wilde, "The New Aesthetics," *Aesthetics*. eds. Susan L. Feagin and Patrick Maynard. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997) pp. 40-45.

¹⁰⁰ John Dewey, "The Aesthetic Experience," *Aesthetics* eds. Susan L. Feagin and Patrick Maynard. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997) p. 45-55.

¹⁰¹ Benedetto Croce, "Theory of Aesthetic," *Aesthetics: Classic Readings from the Western Tradition*. (Sudbury: Jones and Bartlett Publishers, 1996) pp. 278-296.

¹⁰² Immanuel Kant, "The Imagination," *Philosophical Issues in Art*. ed. Patricia H. Werhane. (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1984) pp. 196-210.

¹⁰³ Jean-Étienne Liotard quoted in Mark Roskill and David Carrier, *Truth and Falsehood in Visual Images*. (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1983) p. vii.

¹⁰⁴ Jacques Lacan's idea of the anxiety that arises from the mirror stage in development of the child. My own misunderstanding of "myself" leading to the formation of ego may be the root of this idea of self-look. Lacan's idea is particularly apropos to the sections of "The Hair Narrative" in which any agency the narrator might have felt in creating a self-look is almost completely overwhelmed by the realization that he is in the gaze of others. See "Some Reflections on the Ego" *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 34, pp. 11-17.

¹⁰⁵ Graeme Sullivan, *Inquiry in the Visual Arts*. (Thousand Oaks, Sage Publications, 2005) p. 115.

my "self" arises out of the distance age gives me from an earlier and ever-evolving me. I have been exposed to so many images of "self" in reflective surfaces and in photographs and in comments by others over the course of a long life that I am not immediately immersed in my view of "self" — as I was in younger days; I also take pains to hold "me" further away and like to believe that I see myself better. Part of my awareness of others is in terms of their role in my work to be myself-as-artist-of-self. The creation of a "self" in the gaze of the other is also a central and controlling notion in the story of my hair.

Terry Eagleton complains that "anti-theorists" such as Stanley Fish are wrong to suggest that we cannot examine or theorize about our society because we are immersed in it.¹⁰⁶ Eagleton argues quite sensibly that we do indeed have the ability to gain sufficient distance from our society to be critical of it. But how do we gain this distance from our selves? Of course, Eagleton and Fish are not referring to a physical distance but an emotional and rational distance akin to scientific objectivism. In addition to the ability to see ourselves as reflected by the existence of others, might we also gain self understanding through narrative inquiry and be more effective in that reflection with an additional tool like literary analysis?

I believe that in the story I sing of myself I can most critically examine the "distance," the gap between "self" and "myself" to obtain a clearer view of "myself". I create a kind of aesthetic experience¹⁰⁷ of the "self" I have attempted to construct for the benefit and spectatorship by the other and for "myself". This aesthetic experience, then, might contain the seeds of that "unselfing" spoken of by Iris Murdoch¹⁰⁸, that "detached

¹⁰⁶ Terry, Eagleton, *After Theory*. (London: Penguin Books, 2004) p. 54.

¹⁰⁷ Munroe Beardsley, "Aesthetic Experience," *Aesthetics and Arts Education* (Chicago, University of Illinois Press, 1991.) Here I mean something like Beardsley's idea of the aesthetic experience as both active and detached at the same time.

¹⁰⁸ Iris Murdoch, *The Sovereignty of Good* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971) Chapter 1. Murdoch explains that in order for others to be experienced ethically, one must seek to distance one from one's self and self interest. She sees the aesthetic experience as one of the "techniques of unselfing."

affect” of Munroe Beardsley,¹⁰⁹ that “disinterested interest” of Immanuel Kant¹¹⁰, and may be the place where I hold myself, through my reaction to and through my engagement in this art/story, far enough away to be able to focus on who I am.

And yet, it is often that intimacy of peering closely through myopic eyes, things come into focus.... is there room for an simultaneous interplay of distance and intimacy that we come to “know” “see” ourselves?”¹¹¹

If I unself, as in Murdoch’s use of the term in art through story, does "myself" become the some sort of distanced text that I can treat as I treat the narratives of others so that I can now see "myself" better? Is there unveiling and exposure? or in writing the narrative do we further hide the shadow “myself”? All narratives are suspect; we must mind the gap that we create as well as those created by my/our movement through the narrative. Without an understanding in the art of "self" and of "myself"-as-artist-of-self, can I become self aware in this crucial sense? My own hair story became central to my understanding of "myself" in relation to my "self".

My own relationship with my feelings for my hair as an expression of "self" form and are formed by my feelings and reactions to the events of my life. I have explored the narrative of my hair repeatedly letting the hair and the narrative define and be defined by

¹⁰⁹ Beardsley, “Aesthetic Experience.” “Detached affect” is Beardsley’s term for a kind of emotional distance necessary for a sort of objective view of art. Thus we can experience a Goya war sketch and think about the effect of the marks on the page rather than simply react emotionally to the horrific events that inspired the drawings.

¹¹⁰ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, trans. James Creed Meredith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007) Chapter 1. Kant’s disinterested interest I take to mean the separation of the art object from any utility or economic value it might have. I can enjoy the beauty of a symphony without having to reflect on the amount of money the performers are being paid, for example. I can admire the architecture of Simon Fraser University without concern for its dampness and leaks.

¹¹¹ Lynn Fels, in conversation with Dr. Fels, my dissertation supervisor and personal supporter, June, 2012.

those to whom I talk/tell my story. The narrative fallacy¹¹² is my friend. I am always the current last chapter of my hair story and I am therefore the logical outcome of all of my hair's events. Committing this narrative to paper freezes the story temporarily. I will look into the eyes of the Medusa that is my hair and stop the writhing mass of locks forever by lacquering them to paper. No matter, I will learn as much from this ultimate retelling as I have from every retelling that has been its genesis. I will also leave the story of my hair this time, knowingly unfinished, in the certainty that now that I feel free to cut my hair again, I will join my hair or face it in battle as it curls, greys, recedes and creeps down my body.

The hair inspired narrative inquiry is also incomplete in another important sense. Many social/cultural/political aspects of the times through which I have lived might seem to a reader to have been left out. The Beatles, for example, important to the social history of men's hair styles, are not included in my performance of my hair story because I have no recollection of their having any impact on my life. Nor is the contemporary musical *Hair*¹¹³ mentioned despite my having been in an intermediate choir that sang "Age of Aquarius" to much critical acclaim from my parents. I have endeavoured here, as I always have in reconstructing this narrative for audiences, including myself, to maintain childhood knowledge as seen from a maturing perspective.¹¹⁴ This includes a sometimes maddening realization that I have no idea, at what age I was when some events took place.

I would like to invite you, to look on the hair cathedral that I have created and recreated through the coming narrative. Always and at once my hair is a disguising façade that stands before and tries to hide a place of contemplation and retreat from the

¹¹² I was trained in logic and in science to avoid the narrative fallacy, the idea that an outcome was the result of a story that could be told with that result as an endpoint. Alan Dershowitz made eloquent use of the rejection of the narrative fallacy in the O.J. Simpson trial where he argued that while almost every woman who was murdered by her husband had indeed been abused by him before the murder, only a tiny number of the stories of abused wives end in the murder of a woman. See Alan M. Dershowitz, *Shouting "Fire!"*. (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 2002.)

¹¹³ *Hair* was an off Broadway musical and something of a phenomena of the late 1960s.

¹¹⁴ I see a value in doing what I can to, as James Joyce tries in *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, maintain the narrative as a voice of the self who experienced not the voice of the artist who now writes the script.

heretics about me. I invite you to look, traveller, on it, "ye mighty, and despair,"¹¹⁵ as I have so often despaired behind the imposing gelled, lacquered, puttied and plastered. I invite you because it is in my sharing of the interior of the cathedral that I share, that which is at my core, well hidden behind the language I use. Like the sumptuous work of the Italian craftsmen imported to Albi to make the interior of the cathedral all that the exterior was not, the narrative I construct here is where I — "myself" as artist of self — want the message of my "self" to be.

When I performed my hair story to audiences a certain impatience with my "self" was not in my awareness. Yet in the writing and then in a close reading of my hair story, an impatience arose. It is the attempt to use my training as a literature analyst that introduces concepts and awarenesses surfaced in the written story that confront me with those parts of myself with which I'm now very uncomfortable and which humble me.

And of course the narrative is a fiction, despite all of the reality described within.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵ à la "Ozymandius," see footnote 95.

¹¹⁶ "The Hair Narrative" subtitle.

Chapter 2. The Place of the Hair Story in my Practice

Opening the Self to Students

"Each of us has direct access to only one realm of meaning: our own."¹¹⁷

The piece following was written immediately after a woman ended a relationship with me. It truly was "immediate" in that she stopped at my home to tell me that she had decided to end our relationship without even coming inside the house; I closed the door and wrote this piece on the back of an envelope that sat to hand while I was still standing in the foyer. It was my practice then, and it still is, to speak the words to my computer for a voice recognition program. Choosing a font similar to my own printing and reproducing line spacing allowed me to reread and edit as my own handwriting, particularly at speed is difficult to decipher, even for me.

¹¹⁷ Donald Polkinghorne, *Narrative Knowing and the Human Sciences*. (Albany: State University of New York, 1988) p. 7.

Jennifer VII

Did I make it harder
for you to crush me
turn your foot
Smear
and walk away?

I didn't want to.
But you made it harder
to hear the chitin crack
s l i c i n g through
Muscle, bone
On the way to an inner spot
A core you will not touch.

I learned, you see?
that "we have to talk"
is the movement of the shoe above.
And I scurry, Samsa like, to the wall
And wait.
The air will be pushed,
and roar through my ears
my legs sensing movement.

The apple will be thrown,
And rot in my back
With two dozen others.

But I haven't stopped yet,
And slip beneath the door.
Hoping for a place to pick
from my scarred flesh

fragments of a shell.

Marlowe Irvine (author's name hidden in original)

There was only a single hesitation in the writing that I can remember: the word "chitin" was originally exoskeleton because while I vaguely recalled that there might be a particular name for an insect's "shell," I was not certain what the word might have been. That revision was completed later by naming the protein of which that exoskeleton is composed. It matched the rhythm better. The poem became part of a private collection of verses about relationships (Jennifer I to VII) that I had not intended to share. Later, after the incident I am about to share, and after a chance encounter with the Jennifer for whom the series was named, Jennifer VIII was written and added.

More than a year after this verse piece was composed I was teaching an insightful and enthusiastic group of English Higher Level International Baccalaureate students (the equivalent of a first and part of a second year university course), which in part used Terry Eagleton's *Literary Theory*¹¹⁸ as a text. I had constructed one section the course so that chapters of Eagleton's book were taken up in turn and I had selected certain works for which various literary theories or theorists seemed to provide specific insights. My intention was to convince students that no particular theory was as valuable as a flexible look at all the theories extant. My hope was that they would carry a post-modern idea of multiple situated truths forward into their own encounters with literature.

One aspect of literary analysis that always been problematic was the idea of hermeneutics, originally and still often used in literary circles, to refer to the author's intention. I had access to very few statements by authors of their intentions in works. Having found this particular class of students such a challenging and pleasurable group to work with, I chose to solve my problem by including Jennifer VII in the culminating discussion about how each of the theories we had examined might provide a bricolage of insight. I distributed printed copies without an author's name and the students engaged in a lively discussion running from Marxian commoditization to psychoanalytic symbology.

I discovered during this two hour discussion, which began with a student saying, "Wow, this guy really got dumped," a great deal about the structure of the work which I

¹¹⁸ Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory*. (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 1983)

am confident I was not consciously trying to include. Students spoke of the physical layout of the poem on the page remarking that it seemed as though it reflected the grinding of a foot on a despised insect. They pointed out the alliteration of "chitin" and "cracked" which bordered on accidental in my mind. They saw too, in the soundscape, the fresh crunch of the insect shell and a diminishing noise as the grinding pieces became smaller; they heard the slither of some cockroach creature across a stone floor and under a door. They did not know that the foyer in my home had slate floors. None of these insights were the results of deliberately created language on my part, they may have been subconscious,¹¹⁹ but they helped me see the piece as richer and myself as author more richly.

Another richness was discovered when one of the students flipping through the Eagleton text as the discussion began to wind down commented that we had not spoken of hermeneutic ideas and, in fact, the author's name had been left off. I would not have given this piece to many groups of students but I had prepared myself to admit authorship and engage as honestly as possible in the discussion that would have to follow that admission.

At first the discussion seemed to leap from the printed page and become a discussion of me. Students wanted to know if they ever met the woman. They had met the Jennifer from which the series of poems took its name, but not as it happened the Monica who was the actual subject. They wanted to know the circumstances under which I had written the piece; I told them. They wanted to know when it happened, if they could have helped, and I explained that it happened before I had met them. I was, of course, touched, both by the concern and the naiveté of such a question.

Then the discussion returned to the printed page. And we could discuss both my intention and unintentional use of poetic devices. The spacing of the word "slicing" in an effort to slow the reading down; the use of the allusion to Kafka's *Metamorphosis* that carries the message both of the speaker's feeling at the moment and attitude toward

¹¹⁹ I am not certain that I believe in an unknowable psychoanalytic style subconscious; however, I do believe that thoughts can occur, connections can be made, too quickly to come to notice in our busy minds.

self. We spoke too, of those things that they had helped me to see in the work and we wondered together to what extent someone steeped in literary analysis can truly write figurative language "accidentally." We did not arrive at a definitive interstanding about that idea but one student asked a question which I could not answer and in considering it I came to believe some things about the writing process very relevant to my current idea of narrative inquiry and the therapeutic aspects of writing my own story could be moved in new directions by literary analysis.

The question was, "Why 'With two dozen others?'" in line 25? I couldn't answer. I did not think the number came from Kafka's story; I checked — no mention of the total number of apples thrown; apples don't come in bags or boxes of two dozen; we concluded because we had to conclude with time running out, that I must have chosen it because it "sounded nice." Euphony was not an answer that I found settled the matter in my own head. The following weekend I paged through my set of sketchbooks, envelope backs, napkins, and notebooks. I reread "Jennifer I" through "Jennifer VI" and "Jennifer VII" looking for clues. (Jennifer VIII still not written at the time.) If I found no direct clue but began to wonder if the Jennifer series itself offered the clue. The series was more or less my look at patterns of relationships in a general sense that I had seemed to follow. And I set out to catalogue the relationships, which had combined to become the synthesis that is the Jennifer series in another piece later to be called "The disaster — my life." The catalogue revealed to me that the woman who closed my own door in my face was, give or take, my twenty-fifth failed sexual relationship. It seemed to me at that point little wonder that I had chosen to compare myself to the isolated and rejected Gregor Samsa;¹²⁰ I also saw that this series of failures had never reached very deeply into my core, just as the apple thrown at Gregor only wounded and did not kill, immediately.

¹²⁰ Gregor Samsa is the main character of Franz Kafka's *Die Verwandlung*. (often translated in English as *The Metamorphosis*) In the opening lines Gregor Samsa awakes from disturbing dreams to find himself having been transformed into "ungeheures Ungeziefer" — a monstrous vermin. I have always pictured a cockroach the size of a ten year old child. See <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/22367>.

Opening the Self to the Academic Community

And with the unfolding of this dissertation, I saw that the richness of the language, image, sound technique, literary allusion, metaphor, simile, deliberate and accidental, of the act of narrative, in writing about self needed to be explored, to be shared, to push me to answer questions that a different audience might ask. Personal narrative needs a perspective nudged away from the author's own potentially narrow perspective because of the tremendous value in understanding that comes out of and through narrative inquiry as a small "t" therapeutic tool.

narrative [is] the primary form by which human experience is made meaningful. Narrative meaning is a cognitive process that organizes human experiences into temporally meaningful episodes. Because it is a cognitive process, a mental operation, narrative meaning is not an "object" available to direct observation.¹²¹

"The Hair Story," as Jennifer VII, is therapeutic in that sense. In my practice, teacher inquiry has also had a healing purpose from creating a comfort with teaching science as described in Chapter One to revelations about my concern for the judgement of others to be dealt with in Chapter Five.

Donald Polkinghorne¹²² suggests that an individual's narrative understanding of his or her identity leads to expressions of an inner story of identity and so those working with others must learn to interact with those others as they might a text-based document. "Acting is like writing a story, and the understanding of action is like arriving at an interpretation of a story"¹²³ Polkinghorne calls, in this sense, for something like "The Hair Narrative" and I seek new tools with which to investigate it.

¹²¹ Polkinghorne, Donald, E. *Narrative Knowing and the Human Sciences. Narrative Knowing and the Human Sciences.* (Albany: State University of New York, 1988) p. 1.

¹²² Polkinghorne, Donald, E. *Narrative Knowing and the Human Sciences.*

¹²³ Polkinghorne, Donald, E. *Narrative Knowing and the Human Sciences.* p. 142.

Constructing, sharing, reconstructing, performing, examining and rewriting my narrative of who I am rewards me with a kind of agency. A certainty that, although I cannot relive the events of my life, neither the births of my daughters, nor the loss of my life, I gain power from the retelling and reflecting because I feel myself more fully. Further, by examining the narrative through troubling it with notions of literary techniques used, I gain further insight.

The therapeutic use of narrative is outlined by White and Epston in *Narrative Means to Therapeutic Ends*¹²⁴ and their pioneering idea has become a frequent referent in many types of psychological counselling.¹²⁵ The value of narrative therapy comes in the recognition that we see ourselves as the result of events and are shaped by reactions to characters within the stories, the narrative fallacy referred to earlier, that we hold in our own minds about our lives. White and Epston draw from the foundational work of Edward Bruner in examining the temporally more recent effects of narratives of the past, work I am familiar with from my own exposure to aboriginal self-concept,¹²⁶ in discussion with my students, and my own narrative. I, too, see the story, rather than the events, as the lasting power in our lives. I am the scrapes and bruises of my journey into self but what matters is not how I got the bruise or how I arrived here but how I construct the tale that explains those things.

And so as Epston and White point out, while the construction of a narrative itself might have therapeutic value, "experience must be 'storied' and it is this story that determines the meaning ascribed to experience,"¹²⁷ distance from that story benefits the story teller: "as persons become separated from their stories, they are able to

¹²⁴ Michael White and David Epston, *Narrative Means to Therapeutic Ends* (New York: Norton, 1990).

¹²⁵ According to Google Scholar White and Epston's book has been cited more than 3800 times by other authors (as of June 20, 2014.)

¹²⁶ Among other understandings of my life is a confused mixture of stories and experiences in and around identity. My father's family claims an indigenous identity in the Irish tradition reaching back before the Celtic invasion. Family rumours identify my maternal grandfather as at least half Siksika (Blackfoot.) While stories and contradiction abound there is no tangible "evidence." I only know that I identify very strongly with the experiences I have had in Northern Ireland and the central plains of Saskatchewan and the Dakotas. My mother called me her little "Blackfoot" - I never imagined she was referring to my dirty feet.

¹²⁷ White and Epston, p. 9.

experience a sense of personal agency."¹²⁸ In a sense then, narrative must be the central participant in the therapy because it has replaced the story teller's experiences. The construction of my own narrative helped me to vision and revision the story of how I came to be. But in that telling some aspect of my being was replaced by the story. I was a little boy who died and came back to life.¹²⁹

My long footnote regarding the poem of my "death" at the age of three¹³⁰ points out a utility for therapeutic aspects from and within my understanding of hermeneutics as literary analysis. If I assume a strictly "literary/analytical" frame of mind, as I would have some years ago when examining the work of another, a certain impatience would have arisen: "If this is important enough to say it is important enough to include in the narrative. What is with the 'footnote?'" But when I now look at the poem and the note that "explained it" I reflect on the possibility of healing this narrator, this self, from his "death" at the hands of his hair.

I would like to now share "The Hair Narrative", turn next to the construction of personal aesthetic through performance and narrative, before returning to a literary analysis of the hair prose poem to illustrate the power of the techniques of literary analysis in revealing new insights and depth to the narrative, thus increasing its therapeutic, pedagogic, and personal power.

¹²⁸ White and Epston, p. 16

¹²⁹ Because I have no recollection of a life "before," this is indeed a replacement for an untellable story of self. see footnote 145.

¹³⁰ "The Hair Narrative," line 66

Chapter 3. The Hair Narrative

The Hair Story

(a fiction, despite all the reality described within)

The Other Artists

I was born, very young. And I had hair. I have evidence to support me in these beliefs: photographs; the testimony of parents and relatives; logic, at least in the idea
5 of having been born young; a parallel of my own two children's beginnings from which I extrapolate back to my own.

While I have reasons to think my extreme youth and hair were as experientially tangible for me at that period in
10 my life as the age and hair I live with now, I have no feeling for them or their presence in me. No current, past or residual remnants of the way I felt, can be found as hard as I may search. The youngness has drifted away, and it is difficult to find even whispers of it most of the time; the
15 hair has remained, most of it; though not the same hair I was born with, wrestled with as an adolescent, banished to the hairdresser's floor as a twenty-something; shaved off as a young adult, dyed, or bleached, or tinted or tied-back as I played through adult life, but all the same, my hair.

As it is, I do not know if I, during my infancy, had
20 thoughts about my hair, feelings about how it made me look.
I am disconnected from the few photos so my foundation of
myself-as-artist-of-self is a later narrative retelling me
from a visual otherness.

So, I do not know how I felt about my hair as an
25 infant and one can only wonder into the
mind/body/heart/skin of ourselves as-very-young. If I try
to expand the extrapolation of daughter-infant with hair to
self-infant with hair I can reach no conclusions. Clearly
Rhonyan, my younger daughter, knew at a few months of age
30 that she has hair as she tugs at it when tired, but I cannot
even speculate as to how she feels about it and about how
she feels about how it makes her appear. People fuss with it.
The photographer at her first professional shoot smoothed it
out of her eyes and I wetted it to restore the curl to those
35 straightened front strands as soon as the shoot was done. I
know my mother did the same for me before the pictures. I
love my daughter's curls and somehow wish I can help her to

Love them too. I drag my embarrassment of my hair into her
life and impose it on her. Well, within my head I do. For
40 good or ill at four she thinks her hair is magic and never
wants it cut. May her hair always feel like magic to her,
trimmed, or not.

Because the hair I was born with was and is curly, not
kinky, not wavy. And while the relative curl factor has risen
45 and sunk over the many years, it is that curl, more than
style, length, cut or colour that has defined my relationship
with my hair.

My mother, when I was an infant,
would put her hands on each side of my head
50 and draw them upwards to meet palm-to-
palm, continuing straight up, then use a brush
to smooth all the hair into place, a tunnel of curl riding the
crest of my head. And so a reasonably contented-appearing
baby, head always tilted to one side, sits for photographs.
55 Perhaps the curl weighed my head down, my fat neck unable
to keep it riding high. It looks as though I could quite
happily been hung on a closet rod. I probably wasn't;



probably couldn't have been, but it was a thought I entertained later looking back on the photos.

60 Photographs of me before age three are interesting in that they truly are the images of a missing person.

This is a photograph of me.

It was taken some time ago.
At first it seems to be
a smeared
print: blurred lines and grey flecks
blended with the paper;
then, as you scan
it, you see in the left-hand corner
a thing that is like a branch: part of a tree
(balsam or spruce) emerging
and, to the right, halfway up
what ought to be a gentle
slope, a small frame house.
In the background there is a lake,
and beyond that, some low hills.
(The photograph was taken
the day after I drowned.
I am in the lake, in the center
of the picture, just under the surface.

It is difficult to say where
precisely, or to say
how large or small I am:
the effect of water
on light is a distortion
but if you look long enough,
eventually
you will be able to see me.)

Margaret Atwood

And like Atwood's speaker the me is gone. And gone,
not just to the passage of time or to the changing structures
of thought that deny adult access to infant thought, but to
65 death. My hair marks my death, at two-and-one-half.¹ My
head was shaved; whether before or after my death, no one
can say, at least to me. The child born/reborn in that body,
was more helpless, less able, but as the hair surged back in
thick unruly curls, second to the mass of hair as friendly
70 strangers tried to pat it smooth, the timid me in the wash
below.

¹ I contracted spinal meningitis while on a family holiday. My parents, having lost a child before me, reacted quickly and were fortunate to find a young doctor in the wilds of Northern Saskatchewan who recognized what was happening and sent them on to a hospital, me packed in ice like the fish we didn't catch on the trip.



It was the early '60s and J. F. K.'s bushy, parted hair was the style and the norm for boys of young mothers. So my mother, parted it on the left as it regrew and combed it over as Kennedy himself must have done.

My hair, however, seemed to have lost its memory of that previous self. Hair so willing to curl to my mother's specifications now defied her. No longer obedient it sprang
80 away from my head and I was never to be mistaken for J.F.K. on the streets.

There are a few photos from this time. The boy who was becoming my self never looking at the camera, his hands twisting awkwardly. In some, his left hand is heavily
85 bandaged, in others not as they tried to bring him up to start kindergarten, repair his left-handedness or un-web his webbed fingers. That is me. The beginning of the now me though I still feel no connection to him. Not happy, I think. Almost-bouffant hair on each side the of left side part, spit
90 and pressure from parents hopelessly trying to paste it down

I can't imagine me wanting my hair styled in any particular way, then. It seemed to me that everyone I encountered just could not help but to



95 support my mother's efforts to make my hair be fashionable, tidy, not-quite-neatly structured in lines and certainly not bushing into shredded-wheat waves.

I have memories of hands on each side of my head as the well-meaning held my hair firm, probably with the silly
100 idea that it might stay - well-intentioned but woefully ignorant of their ineffectual ability to have an effect on my aesthetic. My look/my painting of myself, or at least my awareness of it must have been born here in everyone else's concern for my hair.

105 And Misses Lane, Zubricki, and Sampson my grades one, two, and three teachers did not help. Pretty and sweet in the days of teacher-touching, always a hand on my hair. Each of them flattened it at every occasion, hovering around my desk to prevent me from looking as my mother would
110 not wish me to look. I wanted to show each I was clever,

ducking out from under my curls to show a band-aid I carried in my pocket in case I ever got a cut. I tried extra, extra hard to make recognizable letters with my right hand as they trained me to do. But I know all they wanted was
115 for my hair to behave. I wish they could know what they were doing to me, to my self; but then again I wish they never would. They were only kind and it was I who layered their ministrations with criticism.

The Artist and His Medium

120 So I asked, for the first time, to be taken to see Gaye, the Kildonan barber. He was not anyone I would have asked to see before. His comb found snarls so he could snip them out then created more snarls to pull on. But, I reasoned, he
125 could give me what Robbie Campbell so proudly displayed in his third grade gallery of him. Miss Sampson's approval and a flat top.



It was not the current fashion. If I had known anything about music I would have been tipped of by Robbie's
130 repetitive playing of Elvis records in the days of the Beatles,

but I knew that the perfect little spines of Robbie's head did not get squished down by Miss Sampson and I liked his look.

I don't know if barber Gaye had misgivings but he tried. The huge flat-topper was pushed with no little
135 discomfort on my part through my tangled hair and a buzzing "thing," I thought of as only for my neck, was pumped across it, the cord dangling in front of my face.



But there were no perfect tiny spires;
the shortest hair in the centre bent gently
140 forward and concentric spindles of increasing bushiness worked out from there, a bizarre Benedictine monk with a tonsure of wind-flattened lawn surrounded by a bramble hedge. It could not grow out fast enough and I returned to Miss Sampson's class and felt that
145 her disappointment trickled from her hand down through my hair. I began to avoid mirrors.

My brother, four years older, could not, I think have known the experience of betrayal by one's own hair. His hair was perfect - was straight. And when the summer of love, or
150 Led Zeppelin, or flares or whatever it was called, his hair

responded. He fought the you-look-like-a-girl fights; he ground the back of his jeans off with his heels. Parted down the centre, flowing over shoulders down breast
155 and back, his dirty blond hair blew in the wind he created with Grateful Dead strides.



By the sixth grade my brother's efforts to perform an aesthetic of always "Truckin'" a la the Grateful Dead song
160 of that name. I watched him practice striding through the living room so that the flares on his jeans could sweep widely around his civil war boots and the buckskin fringes on his jacket could swing in rhythm with his stride. He even practiced tossing his hair. I was in awe.

165 I started to think I could "look," too. My mother helped. She sewed clothes for me. Not as is so often described to embarrass or to alleviate impoverishment, but to please my need to have a look I could be in. Harlequin shirts red and black, pants that changed fabrics below the
170 knees, and the largest flares denim could provide. People

noticed my clothes. I liked them. I liked the way my clothes looked. I trusted that my looks showed me.

I let my hair grow. This took forever. To get an inch of length I need six inches of ringlet-tracing growth. I
175 encouraged it downward, allowing it a freedom from barbering that would have been the envy of any in San Francisco during the summer of Love. But my hair continued to betray me, repaying freedom with continued restrictions on me. I allowed and trusted it to grow hippie length and
180 hippie look and it betrayed that trust. And I made it work hard to sell me out.

We lived right across the street from Junior High where I would begin grade seven. Ninety-six steps from the house door to the school door. My daily routine began with hair
185 submission routines. I doused it with water not to drown but to submerge it in my will. Wet, it became powerless to do more than wave a little. Quickly, I bound it. A strip of Scotch tape around my forehead another



190 around my neck and a third cheek to cheek around the
back. I paced the house as it changed from drenched to
damp.

I became deft at removing the three strips with a
single finger as I left the house to arrive dampish but
195 somewhat hippie-like at the school door.

But my hair was not defeated; not having truly
drowned it, not even really having dampened its spirit, it
returned. While it could never shed the furrows left in it by
the tape, it began to rise from the
waves, renewed. Parted down the
centre though it was, the two sides
were of a mind and began to rise,
wedge-like, on either side of my



head by noon. The tape grooves persisted as long as they
205 could and were, depending on the humidity, sometimes still
visible at 3:00.

I lost the battle every single day. I never saw the
scope of the war.

Fashion changes; hair doesn't. We moved across the
210 country. Family and the confidence of drama classes, and
friends, and the beginnings of girl-interest gave me a chance
to start as a new person. After a badly misfired start, we
moved again and I found I wasn't bad at reinventing at all.
I knew how to act confident when I wasn't; I made new
215 friends; I met girls.

The Artist and His Brush

But my hair circled my head like a vulture. Looking
for weakness and casting its shadow to prevent real
confidence, cool friends, dates.

220 It became the time of the shag haircut.
The popular and fashionable boys and girls in
my grade nine classes all seemed to have
shags. I wanted a shag. My hair must have clucked to itself,
rubbing vulture wings together, waiting for my personal
225 aesthetic¹ to finally succumb. The straight bangs and wisps
of hair of the unisex shag would seem likely to prove to be



¹ I am using personal aesthetic here and throughout this story as a short form term for the complexity of the feeling that my self carries for the way that I feel that I look, sound, smell, feel, and taste to others.

245 the final death rattle for my look, my self. But I had two
new allies, a new arrival that might help, and my mother, her
sainthood of my appearance, still in the balance.

My mother had long since honoured my dislike of
barbers and began to cut my hair. My brothers and sisters
250 went off at intervals to renew their hair-selves; straight and
blond their hair was caressed by strangers while mine fell in
bits and tufts for my mother.

My other ally was The Dry Look. A new product to
replace the Brylcreem that never "did for me" regardless the
255 size of the dab.¹ Ron Enderland a fellow hair sufferer
comments in his reminiscence of the same hair product:

Dudes with thick hair required only a light
spritz of The Dry Look to keep things under
control. How I hated them. My fine hair
demanded a veritable deluge of chemical

¹ Brylcreem was a men's hair product that beginning in 1949 used the
award winning slogan "A little dab'll do ya." For those with coarse or
curly hair this was a spurious claim.

spray to keep that middle part nicely
elevated and secured.¹

If my wispy-haired co-sufferers of hair-battle fatigue like
Ron found some solace in thinking that the thick-haired,
like me, had an easy time of it; they misunderstood the
260 combat I fought.

A light spritz may have done for the many, but Ron is
wrong to believe that only he soaked his hair
in lacquer. Where the water had failed as it
left my hair, the hairspray could never leave.



265 When sprayed to the soaking point it was a
better ally than water, hardening into a controlling shell on
each strand, gluing them together. The taping of the hair
was far more complex now, but the method was refinable and
I refined carefully, drawing uncrossable battle lines of
270 scotch tape on forehead, cheek, neck in shorter angled bits.

But my hair simply bided its time. It knew better. My
mother's ministrations: snipping the water-wet hair shaping it

¹ Ron Enderland,
http://www.irememberjfk.com/mt/2007/07/the_wet_head_is_dead.php
(accessed February 16, 2008)

to match the magazine images; my patient drying, lacquer-soaking, taping and redrying worked almost perfectly to shape the outside me to suit the inside. The force of the curl
275 was unconquerable, inexorable, however, and with a little time the hair could put a wave in my bangs, flip the wisps at my cheeks out into space and turn thin tails into corkscrews.



280 I was defeated. I certainly felt it. But there were others, with far greater reason to feel a sense of defeat. Larger, and stronger voices, despite greater oppression and greater injustices done them than ever done me by my hair. Black Americans stood and spoke and claimed and were. They
285 were proud and they embraced an aesthetic where black was beautiful. And so was black hair. Kinky and unmanageable by white hair products black hair began to be a symbol of pride, a statement of self, a visible reminder of consciousness of the art of self and value of self.

290 I was about to turn to an aligning of hair fashion and
hair-as-medium borne on the waters of the surge of black
consciousness which arrived in my world. This may seem too
great a leap for a middle-class white boy in Canada, but I hope
that it might help me to explain to my readers and myself what
295 it was I was doing. Far more importantly for me, it is an
attempt to reclaim the state of my awareness in that adolescent
time.

Part Two: Taming and Teasin'

I can remember no black faces in my high school, the
300 visual aesthetics of black presence was exclusively via
television, and print media. I had met my first black person in
the seventh grade. He was tall and thin and his family, who
had joined my father's church were fascinating. Sable skinned,
so dark and smooth you wanted to touch, stroke their faces
305 and feel what that beauty might feel like. This is also my first
remembered connection between visual beauty and the certainty
of tactile continuity with that beauty. If I had known of
phenomenology, of *epoche*, I wonder what I would have made

of that felt connection.

310 We had moved away from Lane and his family; had
moved away to whites' hair variety and Asian straightness,
before my awareness of the statement that people who shared
skin tones with these beautiful people made "black is beautiful"
a very different thing indeed. But images of what it meant to
315 be black, particularly in the United States were to become the
very stuff of my adolescent understanding of what it should
and could look be like to be different. Historians of the
period would seem to be telling me that I was exposed through
the mass media to images of long-haired rock bands, neatly
320 coiffed business types, uniformed Vietnam soldiers, and a
dizzying array of women's hair styles. I do not remember
those; I remember big collars, big cuffs, big platforms, and big
hair, all worn, as I understood it, by people unwilling to
compromise their aesthetic any longer.

325 I wanted the clothes, and my mother, ever the supporter
of my fashion desires, took me shopping. Pair after pair of
platform shoes, a wardrobe full of wide legged cuffed trousers

open necked shirts with foot long collars, leisure suits. I wore them all and I wore them proudly.

330 But despite the lack of black students in my high school community there were afros: three or four out of nine hundred plus students, white kids crowned with a mass of back-combed halleluiaah glory. No hair products and a twisted adolescent sense of affinity for the oppressed as we joined with the brothers in the urban American East. They said "black mattered;" we said "we have afros." For the first time in recorded and unrecorded history my hair and a current fashion were happy to exist together on one head. The person who dangled below the small, but definitively afro-inspired hair might have been seen to smile, draw a long toothed pick from a back pocket, and try to draw attention to a quick restoration of a depression in the globe of hair.



345 Within the clothes and hair there should have been a burgeoning agency. Black power mirrored, if ever so weakly

in a self understanding, acceptance and even a little pride.
Should have.

But my hair had already attained a kind of mastery. I
had been so governed and enslaved my sense of my own
350 aesthetic through my struggles with my hair, that while my hair
now gloried in afro equality, or even supremacy, I found other
scabs to pick at, old scars healed but visible, parts of me not to
like. My unruly hair had taught me the inner critic of my art of
self.

355 So my cheeks had become too fat, my facial hair too
sparse, the scars from fights on my face too noticeable, my
trunk too fat, legs too short, my eyebrows too thick and my
arms too thin. No part of me could win. No part of me hung
in a place of honour in the gallery of me and I hurt, inside
360 because "I was hurtin' out."

The specific memories of the hurt are few but they are
vibrant and still wounding if I give them the tiniest
opportunity. Each year my school photograph became the most
hated relic of wounding my appearance could create. This
365 could be true even before it was to be taken. I clearly

remember leaving our house in tears on "picture day" in grade eleven. I had spent hours on my hair, and almost as long choosing a shirt. I needed a look that showcased me but hid my self so desperately that the frustration of painting the
370 canvas of me on that morning can still keep me awake nights.

For the photographer I must have been a slightly odder adolescent in the parade of slightly odd adolescents who sat before him that day. He tried gamely to have me smile. He complemented my shirt, asked me to lean forward a bit because
375 the girls liked shoulders, asked me about some television show. But I would not smile because I could not do so and still suck in my too fat cheeks. And it was easy to avoid smiling after the morning I had had rushing late out of the door of our house with wet eyes.

380 I had cut the photo of myself from my grade ten yearbook and did not want to have to go through the agony of opening the page to another wrong picture again. The picture was wrong not because it showed my appearance in something I had been led to believe was an objective fashion, but because it
385 showed my very subjective sense of me as inadequate, unlovable, and completely aesthetically wrong. I still have the

yearbook from grade ten, with the sloppily excised square. I burned the tiny picture but since I can still picture it exactly, my efforts came to nothing. I just stopped looking at pictures if I absolutely could not avoid having them taken. I still hate
390 having my photo taken because I may have to look at it. Only my younger daughter can consistently get me to pose. My older daughter is afflicted in the same manner as I, though we have never explored the reasons together.

395 I have my eleventh and twelfth grade year books as well. But I had not looked at my picture in either in the intervening forty or so years until I came to do this work. If someone had asked me before I wrote this section of my narrative, I would have told the inquirer that I had an afro in my grade twelve
400 year book photo. I don't; I have some hybrid other hair style I had tried to form by combing out my afro. The photo was a reminder of the haircut a few days before the photo when the general societal attention for black fashion for and my desire to align myself with black culture, at least as far as I could
405 tell, came to an end.

And besides, according to some of those associated with the mass media "Afro-American only lasted for about two

weeks¹. The suppression of white aesthetic kept flesh-coloured
bandaids, small-assed jeans and hairspray on the market while
410 pomade lurked in drugstore storerooms to tame the kinks into
octoroon² compliance.

I graduated and followed the path of least resistance,
something my hair had prepared me for very well. There is
some strange irony in my hair's stubbornness teaching me such
415 accepting compliance. But while it bent to its own nature it
bent me into a follower. I trailed after my university bound
friends up the Hill to Simon Fraser University, the most local of
our local universities. I had no endpoint, no goal in mind.
Going to SFU was, among my circle of friends, what one did.

420 Gaining Control by Erasing Body

So I was again, as I approached that entry into university,
drowning my hair in cheap hairspray and
limiting my activities around the idea of
"time before curl wins." I went out but



¹ George Carlin "Occupation Foole" audio recording made on March 2 and 3, 1973 at the Circle Star Theater in San Carlos, California. Released October 1973.

² It is an interesting comment on American culture as represented by MS Word that this particular referent is not tagged by a spell check program.

425 never too long, never too late, and as much as possible never
anywhere where I would have to get my hair wet. I was the
first of my friends to carry an umbrella and the last to wear a
hat.

But the hair ministrations of wet, spray, pat and guard
430 were not to last, and my hair's affinity for subjugation by way
of lacquer coating was about to have a benefit for me. The
perfect coif of disco bursting on to the dance floors in my
second year at SFU could be approached, for the half-life of
hairspray, by me. You see, when I cut my hair one and one
435 half inches long, the amount of curl, subdued, to some degree
by layers of hairspray gave me a perfect helmet of hair. As
protective of myself as my bicycle helmet is of my skull. As
good a guardian to my identity as a helmet is to a brain so
physically sensitive to injury.

440 I think, had you seen me on a dance floor in my
Spanish-washed pants, and open necked shirts, you might have
seen a smile, not for the dancing, which I did mechanically;
nor for the music, which I detested; nor even for the promise
of sex with the young women I met because of my low "success
445 rate" (given my desire for something more substantial than a

single night), but for the idea that my hair was an asset in my portrait of self, for the first time. I wasn't faking black awareness and I did enjoy hiding inside an outside that got some positive attention.

450 It worked, day and evening, and weekend nights for nearly a year, but my hair was about to have another victory as I sought to repaint and resculpt my public self, to suit a new art movement.

I have no idea what the experience of creation is like for
455 a working visual artist when a new idea in art is announced, formed, discussed or imagined by critics, art instructors or contemporaries. But I have often wondered if that experience is not like my reaction to the punk explosion. Punk music and punk life happened at the same time as disco but took longer
460 to get to me. The music was angry and interesting and principally, most attractively, not disco. Black, pencil-legged jeans, canvas runners, a scowl and the appearance but not actuality of earring and nose ring accompanied the music on my very first trip to the punk art gallery and club that was the
465 Unit Pitt. I can still feel with my tongue, the scars inside my mouth from slam dancing and remember the pleasure

of hands bloody from wiping my mouth, nose or forehead
indifferently holding beer.

And my hair? Oh, my hair was genius. "NO Mohawk!" my
470 hair had proclaimed, and I knew that the curls would win this
skirmish. But I won the battle just a little, too. Shaved to a
two-inch strip, well off centre, bleached to mushiness in my
bathroom then brushed through with moustache wax¹ my hair
could be fashioned into something like a punk hair style, and
475 after I met Tracy, braided into a left-shoulder tail.

Minding the Gap



I was not happy, no punk could afford to be,
but I was ready to charge off to England, to seek
the Sloane Rangers, listen to anger at maximum
volume and slam and bleed in London. So perhaps
480 this mêlée won, my hair wounded and dragged along as a spoil
of victory, I began to think, really think, about the relationship
I had left and the relationship between the art of presenting
self and self.

¹ Every form of safe-to-the-skin wax, oil, petroleum jelly, and water soluble glue, including old fashioned mucilage was tried before settling on moustache wax. Sadly it could never tame my moustache.

It was the punks I met in London who helped me see the
485 gap between the train that is my self image and the platform
that is where people see me "get off." They were angry, far, far
past anything I could have imagined as a rather pampered
middle-class Canadian university student. They were third or
490 fourth generation welfare recipients without hope, or any
reason to expect hope. Margaret Thatcher was elected the day
after I scowled my way past No. 10 Downing and things were
going to get so very much worse for the English
disenfranchised in the coming years.

The real punks scared me, though they only scratched the
495 surface of fear as I was to find a few weeks later. Their
hatred of everything; their desperate thieving of safety pins to
drive through flesh, their use of permanent epoxies for Mohawk
spikes, their embracing of anything that erased the reality of
England in the late 70s. They were permanent punks, and my
500 costume-punk self slunk away to Northern Ireland, shaved my
head, and sought to join in an equally real, but far less angry,
war.

such an image would have provided. I had "put childish things
aside." and would now grow as an "adult" and with an "adult"
535 appearance. I do remember hating the realizations I had come
to about my hair. I remember allowing my memory of myself
as costume-punk, plastic-coiffed-disco-dancer, white-skinned
afro wearer to churn inside and castigate me at every turn. I
was completely artificial, completely a mask. My personal
540 image of myself was that of the dachshund car dashboard
ornament whose head swung up and down with the car
movements. A bit interesting, cool to a certain group of
people, but aware, deeply, that the mechanism did not work
unless the head was empty. I nodded agreement to the
545 application for a teacher training program without caring to be
successful. There was just no other thought to do another
something.

I applied for a Professional Development Program very
shortly after my return in May and, in order to legitimize my
550 application, began to volunteer with an Adult Basic Skills
Development Program at a junior college that fall. In the six
months I waited to enter the teacher-training program, I had
the advantage and disadvantage of being at least five years

younger than my youngest student. The advantage was that my
555 hair could be explained away because I was a young volunteer
tutor who was not expected to maintain a particular image for
the students who sought help in the program. The disadvantage
was that I could not take myself seriously as a professional
without a professional look.

560 In my twenties, barely, now, I again sought the support of
my mother and her hair-cutting expertise. "It doesn't matter
much," she said snipping at my wet hair, "your hair can't look
uneven." What she meant, of course, was that any errors she
might make would be hidden as the hair dried and curled and
565 put its own "spin" on whatever look was intended. Just as it
always had.

I grew what hair I could in the time I had and my
mother branched out a little into a home haircut kit as I
experimented with the burgeoning number of hair products
570 available to men. I sought others who might be entering the
teacher profession and stole glances at the hair of the men.
They were of no help. Everyone else, it seemed, looked
perfectly teacher-like whatever style they chose and I had

seen the extent to which an important, but largely self
575 determined image creation was interfering with my ability to
"get on with" making a choice for a self-image.

In my last semester before entering teacher-training, I
took a course in physical anthropology. A part of it
involved the discussion of the distances and closeness of
580 humankind to apes. Hair had, of course, to be an issue. It
was abundantly clear to me that a definitive hair style and
facial hair would be essential to me if I were ever to gain a
dominant position in my relationship with the students whom
I hoped I would exercise control over in the classroom.

585 Recalling this now, of course, I am aware of the
tremendous journey my hair and I have undertaken in
understanding teaching as well as ourselves as artist and
teacher. At the time, from the outside, I saw teacher as a
control role. I saw my own teachers as those who towered
590 over me and whom I obeyed in recognition of their superior
status conveyed in the canvasses of self that were all I knew
of them. When they posed, I must have cringed, I reasoned,
even if I had never realized it. Assertive hair and a bold

beard would be necessary if I were indeed to survive the
595 "Blackboard Jungle."¹

So I returned to the concentrated-constraining effort of
hair growth in the few months I would have before my year of
a professional program, a teacher training, would begin. The
hair on my head was predictable. Shaving it off had taught it
600 nothing and I returned to hairspray, hard-bristled brushes and
a regime of cuts every five weeks to keep it in check. As every
artist will probably report, the months leading up to a public
show are exhausting. My preparation for my first independent
show as teacher was no less draining.

605 The hair on my face, which had not since my
grandfather's gift of a safety razor on my sixteenth birthday,
never been allowed more than a day or two of audience, too,
decided to demonstrate that this particular artist-of-self would
have to deal with medium and colour challenges unforeseen in
610 the preliminary mental sketches of my public showing to be.

¹ I had not, at that point seen "Blackboard Jungle" a 1955 movie directed by Richard Brooks, but the title seemed appropriate to me given what I had learned about simian dominance strategies.

Hair growth on my face was uneven, generally sparse, spotty, and asymmetrical. While I had known that I had not had the "manly" even spread of small black dots across the lower half of my face sported by my male acquaintances, I
615 had never associated this with an inability to grow an even beard. My cheeks, which my previous artistic self-awareness had convinced me were too large and chipmunk-like for my face, could produce nothing above my jaw line to camouflage their unassertive roundness. My chin, always too
620 weak, could not thrust forward more than two tufts which gave it the illusion on the canvas of even greater recession.

And the colour! I knew the pigment of my hair well, better, perhaps, than most of my fellow teacher-to-be artists of teacher-appearance. It was, to use my grandmother's
625 term "jet brown." Not black enough for blue-black depth, not brown enough to be mistaken for real brown except in the brightest of lights.

The hair on my face, however, reached into a different set of pigments altogether. Some few strands were actually

630 glossy black but many were a definite deer-mouse brown. As
such, I expected that the beard I felt I needed so
desperately to assert authority from less than five feet above
the ground, was oddly matched to my head hair and made
me look just as artificial as the look I was trying to
635 cultivate really was. I was the artist painting a perspective
landscape knowing that even the illusion of depth was going
to prove impossible.

There was also the red. Perhaps while I had been
abusing the hair on my head with creams and sprays and tape
640 and scissors some of it had migrated to the sides of my
mouth and centre of my chin and joined a new type of
revolutionary guard, determined to become the red menace.¹
It was not just brown tinged with red in the sunlight but
glaringly carrotty and extra coarse so the few tufts of
645 strands could glow as brightly as brake lights stopping any

¹This was a time (the late 70s) where socialist trends, particularly in local (B.C.) politics were being blamed for all economic, political, social, and educational ills. I was as keenly aware of the red in my moustache as of the red underwear I wore. I am aware that the comment about red underwear under blue suits would not be made in the legislature until 1982 (see Hansard, April 14, 1982 afternoon session) but this incident encapsulates the feelings I had about my political self who had to hide strong Marxist beliefs to accepted in the school system I was hoping to enter.

hope of forward motion in the completion of a hermeneutically consistent gallery opening in PDP.

And it had all learned, from the hair on my head, how to curl. Rather than be coaxed into tidy patterns of straight

650 courses to cover for sparse growth it twisted and



twirled and taunted. It chanted teasingly for sprays and waxes but sprays couldn't control it

and it was far too isolationist and thick-bristled

for wax. Even when I eventually gave up the hope for a full

655 alpha-male-asserting beard and settled for a just-better-than-weedy moustache, it would not relent. Tufts would curl

assiduously away from one another to create gaps and

random-appearing parts across my upper lip. Grow it too short and it looked like bunches of twisted grasses on a desert dune.

660 Grow it too long and it would curl viciously up to tickle my nose or downward to dig a bias-cut end into the tender skin at the edge of the lip to bring on sneezing.

The moustache hid a T-shaped scar on my upper lip
from a long ago fight and I could never,
665 having hidden it once, return it to light. And
so hair trapped me again. It required almost
daily trimming to keep it from appearing ridiculous to me or
torturing me with pokes and tickles. It grew best at the
edges of my mouth but this was also where the red hairs were
670 most numerous and I would search regularly for them to
snip them short and stop them from revealing the weaknesses
in my ability as a visual artist to mix the pigments of my
most personal art work.



Solo Show

675 It is one of the vagaries of work as artist-of-self
among the greatest numbers of us that critical review of
public shows is never published. We cannot wait for the
morning paper or weekend review to tell us how the show
was received. Those closest to us become our agents rather
680 than our critics. They are continuously and loyally telling
us that the work is flawless, attractive, and worthy of the

praise and attention of others. They accept because they see
below the layers of brush stroke and lacquer and, in a strange
kind of culturally misguided politeness can not tell us what we
685 most need and would least like to hear.

So, I wondered, and still do, how my first public show as
teacher-to-be was received by a satiated, and probably self-
concerned, audience. There were hundreds of us in the
program in a room being told that one third of us would not
690 survive the year. No one likely paid me any attention focused
as they were on the man at the front, a imp¹ with his own
unique hair artistry.

As though the works in the Louvre were sentient
wanderers in their own galleries, each prospective teacher
695 presented an image as yet fixed and wandered past other
apparently fixed images. I knew only one other on the first
day and he was as unlikely as any to be negatively critical.²

¹ A Faculty Associate with the Professional Development Program was known for his swept up locks, looking akin to a Puck or other such mischievous creature.

² Michael Bell (not his real name) was to become my roommate and great friend. Years later we reached a stage in our friendship where he would at least voice an opinion about my public canvas of self - though I never trusted it because it always seemed positive at its base.

I was awarded a teaching partner for my first practicum.¹
I can, I must say with some shame, no longer recall her name,
700 but her canvas of teacher-appearance is as familiar to me after
thirty-four years as a Rembrandt. She cultivated a casual "West
Coast" of hippie long hair, granny glasses, and bulky sweaters.
She was as comfortable, it seemed to me, within her canvas, as I
was uncomfortable within mine. I wore a tie and a blazer and
705 coifed daily; she wore sandals and a peasant skirt and tucked
 unruly strands behind her ears only when she had to read.

She taught me as much about my relationship to my own
appearance as teacher as I had taught myself. She was a good,
caring person and she was nervous and uncertain in the
710 classroom in an honest way I had not yet learned to admit.
She was also as keen to work with me as I was with her. If my
careful creation of appearance was even noticed by her I never
knew it.

¹ In the Professional Development Program in which I was enrolled, students were sent on a six week practicum after only two and one half days on the university campus. The intention seemed very much to be to create a trial by fire, but for me it was very much a community experience in a shared experience of horror and camaraderie.

715 The students in the classrooms we taught were the same
as she. They accepted the "teacher appearance" I had tried to
create, at least I had that much correct, but they were neither
impressed nor cowed by my alpha-male moustache. They
treated me no differently than my female teaching partner or
720 my clean shaven, cardigan clad sponsor teacher.

 The students also taught me about appearances at a level
at which I had yet to operate. I taught at a school in a very
high socio-economic status neighbourhood. By some misfortune
of geography or school district oversight the Trans-Canada
725 Highway separated a lower third of the school's catchment from
the rest. It was an economic and decisive social dividing line.
I was, at first glance, unable to tell the girls in the two groups
apart, but they could. As I began to clue in, with the
collaboration of my teaching partner, to the dynamics of peer
730 relationships in grade eight English I found that the girls above
the highway wore Nike Waffles, and horizontally striped shirts.
The girls below the highway were not unified in a "look" which
made them outsiders in a very real sense. I wish I had, at the
time, seen the similarity and absurdity of their positions, and
735 mine.

Returning to campus at the close of the practicum the attempt was made to dissuade me further from making a connection between my personal appearance and anything that happened in the classroom. This was, after all, the heyday of
740 behaviouralism in education. Teaching was at its heart as simple as clicking a toggle-plunger on a Skinner box. A teacher created self-appearance the way a chicken laid an egg.¹

But, I reasoned, the effect of the teacher canvas must be as direct as a food pellet or electric stimulus to the brain.
745 Mechanistic and anti-aesthetic as the world was to become in the subsequent teacher training and opening years of my career, my appearance was no less at issue, in my mind, than it ever had been.

The teacher training program in which I had enrolled
750 may not have dealt in any tangible way with the teacher nuances of myself-as-artist-of-self but in other ways it was a fine one. "Perfectly suited to my personality" may not seem a recommendation for any program, given the insecure state of

¹ B.F. Skinner, "A Behavioural Model of Creation," from A Rothenberg and C. Hausman, eds. *The Creativity Question* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1976) p. 268.

that personality at that time, but it is how I feel about the
755 program.

Each of us, in addition to a teaching partner was allowed
to develop a relationship with a Faculty Associate, an
experienced and able practicing teacher seconded for only two
years to work with pre-service teachers. They fit well with an
760 early idea of an Education Faculty who felt that those in the
classroom were best able to develop new professionals; they fit
well with my idea of teacher-as-mentor (though I would never
have called it that at the time.) Over the twelve month period I
had two faculty associates, both women, both very attractive
765 and both fiercely intelligent. It is probable, even likely that I
had met women like them before, but they were the first I
remember noticing consciously. I also remember tying the
power they wore so easily to their appearance. Tall and
striking, they seemed rooted in a kind of confidence that
770 allowed them to move with ease through the tangle of
relationships which are the pre-service teacher's world and
nightmare.

The first explained the vagaries of the male dominated world of the late seventies and made me question, as she questioned, the need for an employed and intelligent woman to have her husband sign for her car loan. The second faced down a belligerent school administration even as she drew every student eye with a flash of thigh in the high side-slit of her skirt. But while I appreciated the power these two women exercised or were denied I was too embedded in what was happening around their appearance to have much of a thought about how they might have felt about the basic injustice of fighting on the tilted field of inter-sex politics. The problem, I remember thinking at the time, was that the first was being ignored despite her attractiveness; the other gaining power only through the use of it as a tool.

The Artist's Agent

It was around this time, too, that I met a very good friend, who might well have gained a great deal of insight into who I was as well as considerable amusement at my thoughts about my appearance and how it operated in the world

of me. Michael Bell¹ thought me attractive. At the same time I
pined after woman after woman, afraid to approach lest they
notice my hair's control over my life. Michael tried to pick me
795 up in a psychology class, and again and again repeatedly
through our pre-service teacher training.

So blatant were his efforts that, I was told many years
later by two of those very same women who I had secretly
wished I could have approached, I was thought to be "with him"
800 in some very real and committed sense. Dare I say that I "had
pulled my wool over my own eyes." I don't think of myself as
naïve in this period in my life. I had a few gay acquaintances,
had met gay couples who were friends of Michael and even
been told, in his company, that I was Michael's type, but it never
805 matched my ideas about what was happening in my life. I was
so convinced that I lacked physical presence outside the
classroom that I saw none of his efforts. When I
enthusiastically embraced his suggestion that we become
roommates during our last immersion teaching practicum he

¹ Michael Bell was taken from the living world by the HIV epidemic. I would like to have used his real name in honour of our friendship, but he had always been deeply protective of his identity as a gay man. He had lived a lifestyle that invited the infection before it was public knowledge and was condemned to the same undeserved death as all who were taken.

810 finally realized, he told me, that I was not getting the picture
at all. He took me to a gay bar and as we sat over drinks
explained what he had been trying to do and why. My wide-
eyed astonishment was not because he was gay, or even, really
because he was trying to pick me up when we met in a learning
815 psychology seminar, but that he would bother. I wasn't gay and
wasn't worth a second look from anyone as far as I was
concerned. I remember the genuine surprise in his face at what
he saw as my naïveté.

He became and remained a good friend and it may have
820 been his support and occasional comments about what he
termed my "cuteness" that began to build my confidence in my
dealings with women. But that isn't what I felt at the time.
What began the new more confident me as artist-of-self was
teaching. My appearance as a teacher was far easier to
825 construct and was, and still is a mask and costume I wear to
protect me. The students and my colleagues are, of course,
complicit in that construction and in some sense their motives
must be similar. It is far easier to deal with the stage
character of teacher than the actor who plays him.

830 It is far easier to suffer the slings and arrows of outraged or
only just critical students when one feels that they tilt against
the external with no clue as to the internal life of the artist
who wears his canvas.

And so as I completed my final practicum and eased
835 without effort into a teaching position at the same school I was
taught lessons about my self which boosted rather than eroded
my confidence in my appearance.

I taught in a small community. While a commuting
suburb of Vancouver, it was relatively isolated and few people
840 made the journey out in their non-working lives. Michael and
I had shared an apartment during the practicum and with the
financial independence of our first teaching jobs we each took
out our own residences. He resumed the very early eighties
hidden gay lifestyle of unencumbered sexual freedom and the
845 bathhouse scene when on holidays. I became a teacher in the
community whose outside of school life became increasingly
inseparable from his school one.

I encountered in that first year a teacher, considered
eccentric by most standard measures of teacher dress in the

850 early eighties, who also became a friend and mentor in the
teaching sense and a model of appearance, or perhaps more
correctly of how modelling of appearance can define a
teacher.

He wore a three piece tailor-made wool suit, tie and
855 brogues every teaching day. In front of the class he was the
don; in black master's robes (he told me privately as much to
project the image he was comfortable in, as to protect his
expensive suits.) His hair was coarse with auburn, Dublin waves
held strictly in place by some regime, his beard full, reddish,
860 and rich and far more canonical than teacher-like. He was, in
fact, an image of a teacher from some mid-century novel.

He was, also, in fact, a good, kind, caring man and a
more than competent teacher in that style that his appearance
embodied. He lectured brilliantly, long after such a style was
865 considered passé. He scolded students for their personal life
choices, long after teachers had become professional
consultants who kept their social opinions to themselves.

He believed in the Western Canon of art, literature, and architecture and tried to develop an appreciation of such
870 things in all of the students he encountered. He believed in the academy and poured his life into it.

His most important question of me was as to whether or not I loved students. As a product of a materialist/
behaviouralist approach, his question confused me. Later I
875 would understand both his question and my answer, "yes, why else would I be here?"

He believed that appearing professional, made one a teacher. He told me always to wear my tie in a full Windsor knot. He wore a vest pocket watch and chain and that sign of
880 punctuality was never lost on his students, many of whom would have never seen such a thing outside of a movie too old to appear except in the latest of late night television.

One anecdote of our relationship is particularly important to my development as artist-of-teacher-self; one who
885 attempts to create a look that says teacher consciously and deliberately. As a student teacher I had volunteered to work with him with a team for a television show called *Reach for the*

Top, which had students competing for recognition for the knowledge of the standard core of school subjects. I had
890 chosen this form of volunteerism because of my own feeling of inadequacies around sports - so athletics were out, and because as unapproachable as this teacher seemed, initially, the theatre department was not yet engaged in a production.

We were to meet the students at the school on a Saturday
895 for a coaching session. I went early to try to impress, the six young men on the team even earlier. I was new, young, and dressed causally for the weekend and the students commented on Mr. B's¹ dressing habits. They asked me if I knew that he "always" wore a three piece suit, tie, watch and chain, and dress
900 shoes. They asked me if I knew that he taught in his robes. Some of them were at the school for their fifth and final year and had never seen him drop his exterior, or the interior teacher role it represented for any miniscule length of time or for any reason. They joked, as young men might be wont to,
905 that he slept in a three-piece suit, knowing, of course that this was in jest.

¹ They would never have called him this, This is merely an attempt to make a writing flow without a name.

So as he would arrive exactly on time, this model-of-
teacher-of-a-boarding-school-cast, appeared in the distance.
To the surprise of all, including me, we could see from some
910 distance that he was wearing a blue denim jacket and jeans.
This bordered on the mystical. How did this man, so "proper" in
his way, think he could pull off a Western working man's suit
and still be the teacher from the movies?

It seemed, when we saw his answer, no surprise at all.
915 When he mounted the sidewalk leading to the side doors we
were to enter we saw that beneath his buttoned jean jacket was
a paisley vest, starched white shirt, perfectly knotted tie, and as
he unbuttoned the jacket to prepare to coach, his watch and
chain.

920 Such obstinately consistent appearance, as much as I did
not adopt the model, was my guide in dealing with my own
struggles with myself-as-artist-of-self. This man lived teacher
daily, and on weekends, as a coach, and a host - we later
enjoyed many meals together - and by living such a life, he
925 seemed to be obliged to also appear to be living such a life as
he walked the streets of his community.

I have many colleagues who prefer not to teach in communities in which they work. I initially thrived on it. That love of community is still grounded for me in this first year of teaching where being considered teacher, being spoken to as teacher, adopting and wearing the role of teacher both on and off the stage of my school life began to awaken in me a confidence that my hair had not quite been able to grind to a final greasy spot in my memory.

935 I felt it was only my appearance that could explain the continuity of my acceptance and recognition by students, parents and fellow teachers which in turn could explain their acceptance of me, kindness toward me, shouted greetings and shouted derisions.

940 Showing up, if not showing Off

I returned in the last part of 1980 to the disco era coif of lacquer, brushing and shaping. I trimmed my moustache daily, or nearly so and NEVER left the house unless I looked like I could step in front of a class of adolescents at a



moment's notice. I still behave this way unless under a great deal of pressure from those close to me to do otherwise.

And, it worked.

In the teacher sense it "worked" because students
950 responded to me on the street as they would have responded to me in the hallways of the school. They said "hello" or they stared past me and the same students did the same things regardless where we encountered one another. The consistent look of controlled hair gave me a consistent life

955 It was also working in another sense, quite important to me. Quite simply I began to feel that I just might be being noticed by women. Women I found attractive seemed to pay attention.

I could always be certain to find a reason not to do
960 anything about that attraction, for instance, I became the master of the surreptitious look at the ring finger for any hint of a sign that this person was committed to someone and I could be relieved of the burden of having to feel that I should approach them. There was some comfort in the quantity of

965 women I felt might be interested which compensated for the
quality of relationships I failed to develop.

My hair must have been truly satisfied to have created
such a perfect hegemony. I had so incorporated the values I
felt flowed for my hair that I now saw it as an ally in my
970 growing confidence about my self-as-work-of-art that I saw its
look, the product of hours and hours of manipulation,
chemicals, clips, snips, and patting as covering up for my other
inadequacies - inadequacies that it had created in the year's of
oppression under its wiry mastery of my head and self.

975 Perhaps I had become less an artist and more a designer.
By this very artificial distinction I am trying to say that it may
be that I had stopped trying to create with my materials and
instead moved them from place to place looking for what for
me was the least objectionable of the alternatives. Rather than
980 imagine a look and head toward it or allow a look to unfold
as I worked. I sprayed and brushed and pushed and promised
until I could live with the result and feel that some observer
was not just not-offended, but sometimes even pleased.

I had entered Picasso's blue period. While he explored as a
985 challenge the task of working within a single colour, I
explored with trapped resignation the task of working against
my hair.

For the next few years my hair and I existed in an
oppressor-become-friend type of truce. While I was to learn
990 later that the friendship was false, at the time there was no
reason to suppose that strife between us had not been
concluded. I met someone to whom I was to become married,
had a child, worked and went on with a teacher's life feeling
in control of my appearance in many ways. A reflection of my
995 concern with appearance might be seen in my meeting of my
wife who I first saw through a camera lens, only noticed as an
image in a developing tray and with whom I shared a first
date, a photography session in the new construction at the
university which I had attended. She had very beautiful hair.¹

1000 Our lives went well enough for many years but events
which I think to be largely unrelated to my hair led to the end
of my teaching job, a move to a new community, a devastating

¹ Hair which she wore boyishly short at that time but which was old-style
feminine at the same time.

house fire, our separation and eventual divorce, though
continued friendship and a new chapter in my hair's vie for
1005 power.

My hair and I left teaching, in 1983. I was the victim of
government changes to the funding of education, but I was
also ready to be done. Teaching had become exhausting, even
more so when I had moved to a small town where there was no
1010 thirty minute drive to the city so I could remove the costume
that I wore constantly in the community where I taught. In the
city I could be anonymous, even if I maintained the teacher
role. I remember telling everyone I was looking for a career
without homework. That was true. I felt I needed to escape
1015 the pressures of preparation and marking so much a part of a
new teacher's life but the truth was that I also found the
constant feeling of being on the teacher stage at work, in the
grocery store, on the streets of town and even at home when
friends from the community visited drew
1020 every bit of energy from me. It was
homework.



I became, for a time a stay-at-home-dad. The need to
worry about my hair's public performance faded somewhat. In

order to "control it" with less effort I returned to letting it do
as it might, but kept it short enough so that it was just merely
1025 unkempt looking. I became clean shaven and enjoyed a short
but uncomfortable truce with my facial hair.

This development in my relationship with my hair allowed
me to regroup to some extent and without the need to "appear"
on a public stage I turned to a new method for dealing with
1030 my hair: I shaved my head; not in the smooth Yul Brenner



sense but through the purchase of an electric
clipper which could be run across my entire
scalp every day or two and which would leave
me with a dark stubble. Life was easier in many senses. I saved
1035 time in the shower because I could give up shampoo entirely. I
returned to university in order to obtain a job with the student
society and without the need, in my mind, to appear any
particular way, I sported stubble with fewer, but not relieved of,
qualms.

1040 It wasn't as though my experience as a veteran of the
hair war had taught me anything about the front I put on. Just
as I had been unaware of my outward appearance in my first
university experience, I was again to encounter a surprise

attack which while neither stealthy nor sudden, which I
1045 neither saw coming nor realized was occurring.

What I had not seen coming was the encounter with a
woman, who as I look back on it helped me to see my
relationship to my own appearance in a very different light.
That dawning realization was to come later, with the first
1050 performance of the hair narrative, but a seed was planted in
an encounter that prompted this verse piece:

What I really think:

Your surface brazenness hides a shyness so deep that very
few have ever seen it.

1055 You are fiercely intelligent. More intelligent, you know, than
most of the other people on the planet. But this is a blessing
and a curse. You can't tell anyone.

You have chosen teaching, in a large part, because of this. It
is a way for your mind to be recognized.

1060 You want people to recognize your mind but not test it.
Some day, soon, you will, desperately need to be challenged
about it.

1065 When you say you "made yourself ugly" so people didn't like
you for your looks what you were really doing was trying to
be noticed, but not appreciated for your looks so you could
reject those who did not see your mind. You said "NOTICE
ME!!! but don't fuckin' touch me."

1070 You tend to "go" for those who are less intelligent than you are, who treat you as less, so you don't have to admit them into your life.

You hate "introspection" activities. You think you are pretty good the way you are.

You are right. About this stuff. You really are.

1075 I don't know who you are, but I am suspicious that deep inside is a molten gemstone. That if I try to open some part of you a crust will form over that molten beauty but if I let you show me I will be privileged to see a something so true that it may crush me. And sometimes I am frightened.

Jenifer¹ taught me a lesson regarding deceiving
1080 oneself through one's appearance. She did it by means and in ways I could not have foreseen and did not notice, acknowledge or appreciate as they happened. Jenifer, you see, liked me. She saw with beautiful acuity through large rents in the myself that I presented to the world, and at the
1085 shadowy glimpses of the self hiding there. She not only did not run, she drew closer, she embraced, she taught. One of my workmates at the university pub, Jenifer was an honour's psychology student with a fierce intelligence and a stunning appearance. Hair spiked and aggressive, Jenifer entered the

¹ Not her real name.

1090 battle of her own appearance as confident victor. She may
also be the only regret of my life.

As attracted as I was to her, I could never have asked
Jenifer for a date. I occasionally picked up shifts at the
pub just to work at the same times as she. We did work
1095 together more often than I worked with any other individual,
but I was sure she never noticed the coincidence. We lived
only a few blocks apart, but I could never seem to do more
than offer her a ride home. Her honour's research was
fascinating, but I never felt that I approached her on the
1100 same field of "look" and was content to stare and listen
and contemplate.

My idea of myself as art-piece was so out of synch
with Jenifer's that I reached a level of comfort with her that
I had not enjoyed with a woman I found attractive. I felt
1105 free after some time to approach a kind of release from the
pressure to perform into a look that she might find
interesting. For her and because of her, I became as much
the artist of my own look as the look itself. We spoke of
creation of look, her spikes and long braid, my shaved head

1110 We spoke of plastic surgery, photographic lies and truths, we
spoke long, long into the night.

And one such night, when I noticed that the sun had
actually risen as we sat joined in an allied note comparison,
I was struck by a strange, foreign, unexpected thought. The
1115 notes from the battlefield guards were confused. My hair's
sentries may have fallen asleep. My hair was a such a
complete and accomplished barrier to physical interest in me
and yet Jenifer spoke of it in the same tones with which she
spoke of her own magnificent mane. I was too short, too
1120 oddly shaped, too clumsy, and too borne down by my battle
with my artist-of-self past and Jenifer seems to have missed
all of this. She seemed so involved in her own parade of
victory; she never noticed that I had lost, repeatedly and
completely.

1125 I was so completely ignorant of my outside
appearance, still, that just as I had with Michael, I missed the
banners of the ally assuming them to be only the flags of
non-combatants. With Michael, I might have been forgiven in
missing that a gay man might be attracted to me.

1130 I was straight and young and moaned repeatedly of my
inability to attract the attention of women. With Jenifer, I
had no excuses. She was female, heterosexual, and I had
wished, almost from the time we met, that she might find me
attractive. And yet, when she did, I could no more see it
1135 that I can the cornea I looked through to see her.

While at the time I dismissed Parker Palmer's notion
of "teaching who we are," Jenifer had that ability. Perhaps
more accurately she had the ability to teach who she was by
showing she was not who she appeared to be. Jenifer is a
1140 university professor now, and if she remembers me it must be
as one among her densest students.

I asked her if "something was going on that I wasn't
understanding." Her response was a demonstration of her
good-heartedness and her complete inability to see that I
1145 was a casualty of battle, not a combatant. Her response was
low key, but it was a revolutionary as revelational as punk
music had been for me. "Why do you think I have been
chasing you around for all of these weeks?"

1150 I was quite shocked not just because it had not
occurred to me that she was pursuing contact, but because
she was pursuing contact with me. I would hope the reader
might understand this a little better by learning that Jenifer
had bundled within what I was soon to discover was a very
1155 fit frame, a volcanic confidence and the kind of keen
intellect that left me weakly in awe. No one was more
likely to see me for who I was, and here - she liked me.

Jenifer's look, too, was bold and proud and
unforgettable. She wore her blond hair spiked with a thin,
1160 waist-long braid to one side. She smoked self-rolled
cigarettes, tore the sleeves from her shirts, and swam and
sun-bathed nude at Wreck Beach. People noticed her; people
remembered her; strangers recognized and approached her
on the beaches of the Greek Islands because she was so
1165 distinct and so attractive; there was only one Jenifer in the
world. Her driver's licence photo belonged on a magazine
cover.

And all of that total wonderful person, wanted to spend time with me!! Along with the confidence her very presence brought into my life, she helped me hone my look. 1170 Jenifer showed me that you could be pierced Thursday night and turn up to work Friday morning unmarred using side cutters and crazy glue.¹ Jenifer taught me to sunbathe nude and to wear bicycle shorts without undergarments. She 1175 taught me to be proud of the physical things I had and I still believe that she was proud to be with the person I was; she seeing more accurately than any up to that point. It may be that Jenifer is my only regret in life because I could not manage to be sought after and cast the relationship away 1180 telling her, honestly, that I just couldn't be needed. I did not tell Jenifer that I said this because I felt that I did not deserve to be needed, but that was the reason.

I was not ready. As much as I wished, still wish on my best and my worst days, that our relationship had survived. I 1185 was not, as I told her ready to need anyone. In a fitting

¹ We would snip the posts and backings from earrings and glue them to either side of our ears, or just glue the jewel itself to a nose. An elegant solution to the need to fit in to the pierced life of the punk clubs and the workplace norms of the day.

comment on my appearance issues she shortly began dating
and soon married a man with a sculpted body, rugged good
looks, a man whose visual identity she and I had joked
about, a man we felt too absorbed in his own physical
1190 perfection, and he had amazing hair. He was it seemed, at
appearances, to be a very nice guy; I was to learn from her
many years later that he was not such a man, but his hair was
perfect.

My hair was still not perfect, still there, it was just as
1195 ready to give or withhold favours as its mood dictated.

Working in the University pub, I was sometimes treated to
attention because of my hair. A head barely
covered by stubble was enough of a novelty
at the time that women would ask to touch
1200 my head; a favour given by my hair. It was
also ignored, and one occasion of this sort led me again to
rethink my appearance and, soon enough, to return to the
battlefield.



Very late one evening really, very early morning, I was
1205 returning from a pub closing shift in the wee hours of

the morning. On a very dark section of the road I noticed two young women hitchhiking. Knowing for myself that I would do them no harm, I pulled over and they scrambled into the disarray of a pick up truck I had borrowed that

1210 day. They were in their teens and quite drunk. I was struck, as a father, by the risks that by all appearances, these girls were taking. Here I was, in the dark of the night, shaved head, aging truck and reeking of beer, and here they were ready to jump in and be driven away. They acted

1215 without thought for my appearance and I feared for this foolhardiness. I dropped these two girls on a well lit corner from which they said they could walk home in a minute, went home, checked on my own little girl, and began to grow my hair.

1220 **The Hair Story: Volume 4**

My hair and I returned to teaching after five years away. An intervention by my friend Michael guaranteed me a teaching job in an independent school and I went back to heavily sprayed, side parted, short-back-and-sides

1225 conservatism and lived there even after I returned to the
public school system by the end of the 1980s. I would have
likely lived there until retirement and baldness, if it were
not for my mother.

At some point in the early 1990s I went to my parent's
1230 house for a Thanksgiving dinner. It was typical of our
family, every child, spouse, offspring of said children and
spouses, ex-spouses and any relatives in town, a few recently
met strangers, and associated hanger's on at one table while
my mother served everyone herself. And we ate at a single
1235 table - or really set of tables, my father having built a
number of folding tables which could be placed side by side
to turn my parents already large dining table into a room
filling plateau. This meant that as she brought food to the
table my mother had to squeeze sideways behind us and lean
1240 over in order to put down a dish, or take away a plate.

My mother has always had a close relationship with my
hair and served once again as its unwitting ally. She was
passing behind my chair and remarked quite casually "you're
getting a little thin on top."

Now, as much as my hair and I had never had an easy
1245 cohabitation I never wished it gone and
to be reminded of the common fate of
men the world over while in what I saw
as my vibrant thirties was not something
I needed. The comment followed me around for several
1250 days, haunting recesses of the hair battlefield raising its
balding head at every lull in my life.



And that comment, really just a gentle, simple
statement of the state of my hair won the battle for me.
After so many years of battle, truce, battle, hiatus, battle,
1255 defeat, defeat, defeat, I won the battle because I was
apparently in the process of losing my foe. My battle gear
still scattered over my bathroom counters I was being told
that it was soon to be as useful as a club would be in a
battle with spirits.

1260 However, I had not lost my long standing enemy, not
yet, but I was so convinced that I would that I became a bit
like Achilles at the gates of Troy. It was not good enough
to defeat my hair; I was going to drag it around my walls

humiliating it for all it had done in defeating my youth.

1265 After a lifetime of watching my hair Hector murdering my
youthful Patroclus I was going to claim a victory and then
show my enemy my wrath went beyond mere victory; I would
revel in my control over the dead body of my enemy.

I let it grow.



1270

The gel that would not have been
able to spike it in my punk days de-
frizzed its curls. I swept it back and
ignored its attempts to tangle, knot and
snag. I went years without owning a

1275 hairbrush of any kind. I became involved in life and worried
less about my hair than I had ever worried before.

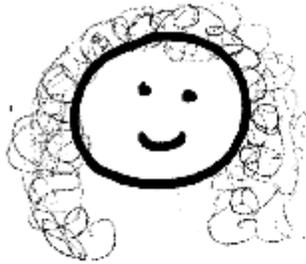
I was now in a kind of war of retention. I held on to
my hair as though I could prevent attrition through
acceptance. It began to grey. Just a few strands of white
1280 here and there but I embraced their presence as a kind of
second life for hair. My younger sister had developed
attractive salt and pepper hair just as she entered her 30s; I

thought I might prefer grey to invisible. As it began to be more noticeable I found I liked my grey hair. It seemed to
1285 say "here is an interesting person" but not yet "here is an old person."

And as it grew out I realized that as individual strands thinned the curl began to relax. Rather than a steel wool firmness my hair eased into a coiled pigglety grace.
1290 The grey hairs, being younger, sprung a little more tightly, but I knew that as they aged they too would relax their vigilance in their mastery over how I felt about my appearance. I began to dare to think that my hair was preparing to surrender, to yield to my mastery over it and to
1295 begin to seek negotiations for truce.

I was not prepared to be lenient to my enemy. I would not allow my hair, after so much abuse of my feelings for myself as a work of its art, to simply retreat and retire slowly from the battlefield leaving it barren. My hair was
1300 not going to win this long war simply by giving up and disappearing.

I was to grow it long again, then bleach it orangy-



yellow, wait, and cut it into a two
tone black-rooted, bleached-tip,
badger-fur look. I discovered new
products, new
techniques,



highlights, elastics, colours, pins,
glues, hats, elastics, tints, and snips.

1310

And so it is that my



exploration of my
own thoughts about
myself-as-artist-of-



self came out of a need to address what had

1315 been for me feeling of almost crushing

inadequacy, and a new inadequacy has a place on the top of
my head.



Eventually I even welcomed back a
beard - and played with it, too

Chapter 4. Inquiries

performative: of an utterance that calls into
being in the instance of being made
performative: of a seeking through doing and
being
performative: of a becoming through
declaration and action

Marlowe Irvine

Performing and Being Performed

In the 1994 work *Imagologies: Media Philosophies*, Taylor and Saarinen sought a meta-pedagogy in which the "imagologist does not seek truth but entertains enigmas. ... the academy and mass culture worship the altar of clarity and simplicity, which the imagologist shatters."¹³¹ Part of that project was to arrive at a description of what they saw as interstandings — a relational concept of knowledge rather than the hierarchical one intimated by the word understanding. "Interstanding is meaning-making as realized and recognized as what is possible between and co-interdependent as opposed to understanding which may be read as objective and individual."¹³² In this dissertation I seek a new interstanding with "myself" through the telling and examination of the prose poem narrative that is a constructed script combining my recollections of the many

¹³¹ M. Taylor and E. Saarinen, *Imagologies: Media philosophy* (London: Routledge, 1994) p. 3.

¹³² Lynn Fels, "in the wind clothes dance on a line: performative inquiry —a (re)search methodology." (PhD diss., University of British Columbia, 1999), 5n.

pedagogic performances of my hair story that I have undertaken and the application of close reading techniques to that self-authored piece.

Interstanding (in addition to and not opposed to the single meaning understanding) identifies a performative act as one interstands the relations among ideas of the discourse of "performative" and is something I would like to seek first in this chapter. I would like to follow with attempts at crystallizing my own understanding of the aesthetics of appearance, the politics of appearance, and the pedagogy of appearance and the pedagogy of performance before returning to outlining the discourses which might occur around the interstandings among those discourses as they inform my own examination of a performance of the performative "self". The performative self is central to the pedagogic hair story around which this dissertation revolves. Throughout, my inquiry into that pedagogic story of "self", I will interact with the fluid word-mazes that arise and the broken tensions of identity as well as the recognitions of the "self" and other and "myself" within their coexistence that constantly informs and obscures the journey and the stations of arrival.

The first difficulty is in picking my way through and out of the bramble hedge of words, particularly as they are used in most of the academic language that forms the fields of educational and literary writing and literary analysis with which I have been most familiar as a practicing teacher. We so often choose to ignore that words, which are traditional parts of discourse, "understanding" as one example, carry with them a heteroglossia as well as apparent etymological hints that lean and shift as one hopes to enter into a discourse. The "under" of understandings has its roots in the a notion similar to "beneath" but also took on (or always had in oral parlance but only later entered written exchange) the idea of being in accord with, via association, "stand." Thus, , seeking to understand my partner does not mean seeking an "undering" of her meaning or a sense below mine. However, in the tradition of empiricist/materialist valuing of one who understands over one who does not understand, it is a deliberate dismissal of the empathetic nature of the relationship of understanding in the Anglo-Saxon "stand" with the addition of the Greek, Latin and Germanic "under."

Further,

Anyone presenting a theory about understanding must be aiming to understand it: surely a philosophical task. But there is a need to tread carefully, to avoid begging the question. To set off by trying to define understanding would be a poor start. Can we assume that a definition — or a theory — offers a route to understanding?¹³³

If a word as commonly and thoughtlessly bandied about as "understanding" can spawn a one hundred and thirty-two page book, *Understanding Understanding*,¹³⁴ that is only a "route" to "understanding" and if "understanding," can also be dragged through the bramble of post-structuralist thought and sheared in ribbons, how much thornier I find the path to an interstanding of "interstanding" and the corollary interstanding of the natures of the aesthetic which might inter-exist within and without a performative self.

This is not some game of words. It is a serious attempt to approach an internalization of co-created, co-"understood," interstood discourse in which the values hidden within the words that I use is at the very least examined, if not fully understood. But these are the words that I hope that my reader will be familiar with and they are, at the very least, a place to begin. And once begun, that our journey into understanding and interstanding may be illuminated by close reading of the words that report the journey.

So instead of an "understanding of the language," I will join Br'er Rabbit in a briar patch¹³⁵ of self-generated and academic discourse and seek an equality with its use; rather than allow the norms of academic language to dominate my language, I hope to sit and pick the entrapping tar of this close contact from my fur at the other side. As I embrace interstanding, as I came to more deeply understand it from the work of Lynn Fels,¹³⁶ I will try to engage with the tension without becoming obscure.

¹³³ Richard Mason, *Understanding Understanding*. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003), p. 1.

¹³⁴ R. Mason.

¹³⁵ A text of one version of this Br'er Rabbit story, an apparent favourite of mine as a young child, can be found at: <http://www.americanfolklore.net/folktales/ga2.html>

¹³⁶ For me, a hierarchy did exist here, but this paper led to its erasure, I believe, an interstanding.

Identity as a Performative Act

In teaching, you must also come to terms with prior voices, mentors, influences; the long evolution of a particular, and effective, teaching voice involves periods when you are barely in possession of a singular voice, dark when you question your ability to teach at all. The anxiety of influence affects teachers as well as writers.

Few outside the teaching profession understand the courage it takes to step into a classroom, to wear a mask that you know is a construction, hiding behind it, letting it give shape and substance to your formulations, letting the mask become your face. It takes a certain bravura, even a certain wildness, to let students see you in such a state, at the mercy of a text or inchoate idea, trying to formulate a response to the text, to embody the idea in language that a diverse range of students can assimilate.¹³⁷

I would like to explain my own "bravura" in facing teaching by engaging with the three notions of "performative" with which I opened above: of an utterance that calls into being in the instance of being made; of a seeking through doing and being; of a becoming through declaration and action. As Charles Scott says in his work on Martin Buber:

dialogue provides an ontological orientation to dialogue that, though it recognizes that dialogue certainly does occur through our speech acts, does not limit dialogue to those speech acts. Rather, it provides that ontological foundation from which these speech acts can be developed.¹³⁸

Like Scott, in following Buber, I see all potential aspects of dialogue as inter-dependent, inter-active, inter-woven, and, fortuitously, interruptible. If I seek and discover that

¹³⁷ J. Parini, p. 68.

¹³⁸ Charles Scott, p.24.

tension of the interrupt, not quite Appelbaum's stop,¹³⁹ I hope to recognize that "a stop is simultaneously a moment of risk, a moment of opportunity."¹⁴⁰ Through the tensions of the partial and temporary redirection of the stop, and later, through its re-examination as a literary work, an informed interstanding of the notions of performative self in a more holistic sense.

Lynn Fels, in her 1999 work, looks at performative inquiry as a research methodology. Here she writes of the "stop embodied in action and interaction through performance that opens us to possibility."¹⁴¹ And she posits that "it is *through performance* that cognition or learning may be realized."¹⁴² My own journey contained many potential stops, which were not realized, not at the time, and not even after considerable reflection. They moved closer to realizations when I subjected them to the techniques of literary analysis which I will put forward later in this dissertation. For Fels,

the catalyst for inquiry may be a question, an event, a theme, an issue, a feeling, a line of poetry, a fragment of lived experience, a narrative quest, a human condition: any phenomenon which we wish to explore through performance.¹⁴³

For me the first performance was a first unfolding but it seemed that it took many performances (as I have said earlier performances were created for each graduate cohort with which I was involved in more than five years as a teacher educator,) the

¹³⁹ David Appelbaum, *The Stop* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995) Appelbaum's "stop" is, to me, a moment of realization.

¹⁴⁰ Lynn Fels, "Mind the Gap: Outrageous Acts of Political Solidarity." *Educational Insights*, 2009, 13(3).

¹⁴¹ L. Fels, "in the wind," p. 34.

¹⁴² L. Fels, "in the wind," p. 42.

¹⁴³ L. Fels, "in the wind," p. 37.

writing and re-writing of a script, and close reading of that script to come to many of the realizations that lay invisible to me in my pedagogic story.¹⁴⁴

One aspect of the sense of performative nature of identity is in the instance of the naming of a child — a new identity of a person is denoted. Except, of course, that is not new, or unique, and is also only new and unique. My parents named me, both literally and figuratively, after a playwright. When first assigned to me, in utero as family legend has it, this name performed in this sense that formation of an identity separate from all who came before. But the name comes with threads reaching back through the heteroglossia of its use to that instant — and since. I was awarded and bound to an identity signified by a word of seven letters, as all my siblings, and my own children; I was awarded and bound to an identity my parents hoped would have a greater content of gender neutrality; I was awarded and bound to an identity associated with great drama, soul destroying ambition, an early death, conspiracy and eclipse by a William.

I was also bound to a sort of morpheme of "Marlowe." Marlowe a sound and potentially meaningful combination of "mar" to scar or mark, to ruin or spoil, to tarnish, to blight — a poor, and perhaps an appropriate etymology for a public school teacher. There is, also, the idea of "mar" from the Greek word for sea and by extension to the horse in the mirroring of the manes of the horse in the waves of Poseidon's displeasure. This parallel notion joins the discourse around the phoneme of my name and then is hampered and may explain my inability to swim and discomfort around bodies of water. Then there is — lowe — "close to the ground (true as it happens), below average, to make a sound like a cow — again, perhaps, an appropriate sound etymology for a public school teacher.

I am none of those things because I was not alone any of them, but I was not alone any of them because I was all of them. And most importantly all of those meanings of identity in my name only existed because of all of the others. The promise of the being

¹⁴⁴ There is a parallel here with my guerilla installation work in Vancouver. I would position myself next to a printed conversation prompt at tourist destinations in Vancouver (for example on a bench in Coal Harbour next to a sign that said "Yes, isn't it.") "Vancouver for the Shy Tourist" see footnote 3. I learned far more about myself as artist and resident of Vancouver than I did about those individuals or small groups of people who paused to engage with me.

"Marlowe" came into existence through the act of the other, the naming, and the future of that being is defined and redefined through interaction with the other and in absentia as the other considers and performs the act of naming and remembering Marlowe.

And at some point, I performed the act of self naming and became what I professed and pronounced. And I made the pronouncement, in all likelihood first as a pronoun. I was a "me," even though I must have understood that the other's announcement "Marlowe" indicated the "me." I probably did not make that announcement in my own words for some time. But make it I did, I am sure, most children do, and I began performing my identity in another performance sense.

And then I ceased to be:

i embody the event of my death

Perhaps it's because
i've already died
that i feel no need
to account for
an after
because i live it.

And that life holds
no drama for me
because it is endless.

How will i die
next time?
"been there; done that"
"oh no, not again,"
or
"Well, my friend, here you are.
Long time; no see."

Marlowe

145

¹⁴⁵ I died once,

but I got better.

When the footnote is longer than the poem:

I do not normally like to add anything even remotely *explanatory* to my verse pieces but in the interest of demonstrating the space this tiny piece occupies, within this paper I do so now. It is non-fiction and written as an exploration of the work of Kathryn Ricketts and Robert LePage.

But it fits here because it is a reminder of a time when the performative act of calling into being by naming lapsed and was reborn.

Shortly before my third birthday I was interactive with spinal meningitis and entered a coma for three months. My identity was erased. I knew no language, could not walk, failed to recognize my mother, was, in fact afraid of this woman who was not the nurse with me when I awoke. I was dead and reborn in a physical sense; it seems in an "identical" sense as well.

I am particularly dissatisfied with my use of the word "drama."

It seems such a pity that I cannot return and join a discourse with a me who was before and the me who came into being after. It is curious that what some analytic linguists call the floating signifier "I"¹⁴⁶ in my case truly came loose and floated during three months in a coma and did not return. The materialism of physical self in the hospital bed may have remained mostly constant but as far as anyone could tell the "me" left. I rather like to see it as the term "Marlowe" being an informative example of the free play of signifiers à la Derrida. "Marlowe" is not fixed to a signified but is engaged in a multiply iterative referral of signifier to signified¹⁴⁷ and I believe that that referral exists equally within other associated notions of performative and is too limited to be of value without them.

We also engage in a self identity by doing "it" and being that identity. We are, basically, who we think and perform we are. And despite all of the psychoanalytic, behavioural/materialist, ethnographic studies, and cognitive-affective theorizing notwithstanding, we can do little else. We operate with the understanding, in the sense of being below, that we have a self and that there are others and that we engage in being our self at all times and they engage in being the other. In this way the performative act of being self in relationship with other is inescapable and hovers just below the level of our awareness in all that we do and all that we are.

In an attempt to clarify, I would like to adopt Heidegger's *dasein*, a being, in this case a self, who is capable of understanding that it is. The *dasein* is self-aware; it can say "I am" and it knows what that means. The *dasein* also knows that being and being aware of being are engaged in complex interactions, which are difficult to think about, perhaps impossible to reconcile. And so the *dasein* that is the ordinary thinking me proceeds as if I am ordinary and thinking and thinking about such thought, at least occasionally.

The utility of including the idea of *dasein* brings with it both an understanding of its opposition to the object-subject separation but also informs my growing

¹⁴⁶ Roman Jakobson, p. 1. As I will explore here the idea of a floating signifier becomes far less problematic in a discourse based notion of language. In a sense, all signifiers float.

¹⁴⁷ see Jacques Derrida's explanation of the transcendental signifieds, *Of Grammatology*, p. 49.

understanding through the work undertaken in this dissertation of a disconnect between the perceived self and some yet-to-be-interstood self not just as a witness but as the one who performs. Just as Heidegger, in *Being and Time*, appears to want *dasein* to be the beginning of the discussion of what it means to be, I would use the idea of "a being aware of its being" to enter into the discussion I have with "myself" of "what it is to be me" a kind of interior intra-dialogue. That awareness will have further utility as I attempt to show that close reading and literary analysis engage with the "being" "aware."

And so what I do and know is informed by and informs that I am. When I engage in an internal discourse, the *dasein* that is me attempts to foresee, or forestall the actions that are and define me to the other and to my self. During my education training I had heard that John Dewey said "learning is by doing;"¹⁴⁸ I would like to suggest that what Heidegger reminds us is that being is by doing and that is the only way that we can learn to be. Lynn Fels reminds me, too,

that learning is knowing, doing, being, creating, and it is this understanding, that of the self as a creative performative self, an understanding that our performative selves may shift, subject to the underlying influences, experiences, encounters, that encourage a performative response to engage anew.¹⁴⁹

Another aspect of the understandings of teaching identity as a performative act is the necessary recognition that an identity is, even within a discourse, a type of declaration that is always performed, and is always located in the action, and is always onstage and backstage. An identity is not a fixed character like an unread description in a play manuscript. Just as we see that a play only exists in its performance, we know that we only exist as we perform — it is just that for us, this production never ceases. Our identity cannot be imagined and designed and then taken into the world and put on like a Noh mask. An identity is a discursive and reflective, imagined and realized,

¹⁴⁸ I have since discovered that this is not a quote from Dewey but rather a summation of his attitude toward inquiry expressed in *Experience and Education*. See John Dewey, *Experience and Education*. (New York: Collier Books, 1963.)

¹⁴⁹ Lynn Fels, in conversation, 2008.

improvisational performance as much owned by those who attend as the one who initiates.

And a performed identity is not inauthentic:

One must get over the foolish notion that a mask is not "authentic," that there is something shameful about "not being yourself." Authenticity is, ultimately, a construction, something invented — much as a particular suit of clothes will feel authentic, or inauthentic, given the context. The notion of the "true" self is romantic, and utterly false.¹⁵⁰

We each enter our role(s) the moment we are conscious and we spend the remaining days of our consciousness engaged in a drama. Like the characters on the stage we interact with those playing other roles and find and re-find our roles in a constantly unfolding improvisation before an audience who also informs the performance and ourselves as actors. The classroom is no less a place of performance. There are roles, and scripts, and improvisation, as well as audiences and spectators. This is what makes performative inquiry such a powerful methodology by which to explore classroom dynamics and teacher inquiry. I seek to add literary analysis as an additional possibility for teacher inquiry believing that it is a useful lens for deeper interstandings to be developed.

The interactions between those involved in the improvisation may result in unexpected tensions. In role drama, for example, it is not uncommon for a participant to undertake an action or response congruent to the situation of the drama and the role which she or he is playing, and yet, if that same participant was faced with a similar situation outside the drama, he or she might opt for an alternative response or action, given personal convictions or desires.¹⁵¹

But in the role-play that is the performer's life there is no "situation outside the drama;" there is only the performance as exciting and tiring as any faced by the Stratford

¹⁵⁰ J.Parini, p. 59.

¹⁵¹ L. Fels, "in the wind." p. 57n.

players. We must engage as individuals performing our identity in a continual confrontation with tensions and an ongoing, if not always aware, gathering of recognitions. And many of these recognitions whether we know it or not are recognitions of a performing of our identity. Public performance of our self and life makes these performances pedagogic and they seek to teach some of "us" to the audience who surround us. We must work to awaken further awareness of the identity we perform. I am suggesting in this dissertation that literary analysis of our own life and art and work might contribute to that awareness, that wide awakesness.

How delicious to think of our lives as though we are players. Many of us assume that we are only one character, or that we are one character at a time and yet we play the entire *dramatis personae* and assume duties as stage manager, costume designer, and props person. We are the butler who did it; we are the King who ordered it; we are the tragic hero; the arch-villain; and the comedic genius who wrote the script. We are also the make-up man, the props girl, the hidden prompter and the costume designer. But we are not the only directors of the identity; we have handed out all the roles and become part of something resembling a Robert Le Page production¹⁵² — each member of the cast, everyone we deal with and everyone who deals with the idea of "us" — constructs the role(s) that we understand for ourselves. In a true sense of interstanding we are only ourselves in the confluence of all of the forces that perform our identities. It is exhausting to be writer, director and principal actor; this must be why we need the curtain each night.

Three loci of performative identity: the utterance,¹⁵³ the doing and the action engage us with calls to see the performative act of identity as constantly in tension, constantly in a state of almost-recognition and forever re-tensing and re-cognising. We

¹⁵² In a public lecture given at the University of British Columbia on Monday, 15 February, 2010, Robert LePage reiterated a statement frequently attributed to him. He outlined a completely cooperative writing process for his stage plays in which the entire production company take an active and equal part in the co-creation of the stage play. See also: Aleksandar Dundjerovic, *The Theatricality of Robert LePage*. (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2007) ix-x.

¹⁵³ I would here like to maintain both Bakhtin's idea of the hetero- and poly- glossia's of utterances from "Author and Hero in Aesthetic Activity"; as well as Jacques Derrida's idea of utterance as a "breaking act" from "Signature, Event, Context."

almost know the stresses with which we engage in our performance, and as we do we create a new performance, which must be understood again. In the interstanding we are Wordsworth's villagers.

Action is transitory a step, a blow,
The motion of a muscle, this way or that
'Tis done, and in the after-vacancy
We wonder at ourselves like men betrayed.¹⁵⁴

Where have our actions of performative identity lead us? Have we been betrayed or do we just feel a betrayal because what we saw as self, we found through performance to be an illusion, or at least something too ephemeral to maintain existence in the work of performing it? And when I fix the performance of this pedagogic story of the performed self into a script, I create a different form — a literary one, an artefact similar to those I am used to engaging with in the manner of literary critics. That script exists in the interstice of teacher inquiry, performative inquiry and narrative inquiry, drawing on all three endeavours and informing those endeavours within myself simultaneously.

Aesthetics of Appearance

The relationship between our appearance and our sense of identity as a performative act is at once informed and dis-informed by a deliberately superficial sense of aesthetics as mere appearance. That shallow sense of appearance as first and only skin deep is something I would like to explore and augment. Appearance is the sense in which we initially, in the temporal sense of our encounters with others as we perform and declare self, and spatially in that the self we carry about as external appearance, is our first declaration and performance to others.

"It's a boy." With those words, with that performative utterance, a doctor introduced my older daughter to me and to her world. My response "no, it's a girl" had no more grounding than did his. In our societal, perhaps species, fascination and need to provide gender identity based on appearance, based only on that very superficial idea of

¹⁵⁴ William Wordsworth, "The White Doe of Rylestone or The Fate of the Nortons." lines 112-115.

appearance, the doctor responded to a swollen rear view and I to a frontal one. Both of us sought in that instant to declare and create a gender identity for a young person. This was, and almost always is a frighteningly simple and forever imprisoning fact-of-identity creation, based on that most superficial aesthetic, genital appearance.

Nothing of my daughter, her personality, her intellect, her health, her desires and wants, her DNA were considered in declaring her female. And while to the best of my knowledge she does not consider this a confusion, as sometimes happens to young people when those internal realities of gender do not appear in the external aesthetic, I cannot help being haunted by the kinds of permanent sufferings that all of us encounter because the first response to the first question about us is based solely on how we look.

That reaction never leaves us, is repeated over and over again and it has long term and far reaching implications for who we are and how we perform our selves among and for others. And so it is with so much of our appearance. Hair, clothing, height, stance, movement, all are reacted to as the audience of our appearance responds to that aesthetic sense of who we come to be as we declare ourselves "me."

In the sense of the self as an art experience we transport around a kind of mobile gallery of selves presented like painting or sculpture or performance, which broadcast and joined with the interstanding of who I appear to be to others, then becomes a part of my internal idea of who I am as a "self". I wear a costume for this performance every bit as superficial and powerful as the one worn by the actor on the stage; more powerful because of who-it-makes-me-think-I-am-to-others. The costume is at once dismissingly flippant and intensely and desperately serious because I am seeking to be present and approved of in the presence and response of others.

The act of performing an appearance creates a new appearance and therefore a new "self." I cannot escape the co-creation of my identity based on how I appear. A contrast to the merely superficial sense of the aesthetics of appearance is found in Gerhard Hoffmann writing of the movement in literary understandings from the Modern idea of the aesthetics of appearance to a Post-modern idea of an aesthetics of disappearance, he describes the former:

The aesthetics of appearance asserts place-identity and a sense of rootedness, creates spaces and times of individuation and of social or universal connection, and establishes a coherent perspective of continuation; it opposes spatial and social disaffection and barrenness, the merely insignificant and superficial.¹⁵⁵

I would like to explore this idea as it touches my ongoing performative act of being a "self" even while recognizing that the aesthetics of disappearance which

denotes the vanishing of time and space as palpable meaning-giving areas of social life. In this sense, it is a reaction to a change in reality, or rather, in the sense of reality. It ultimately cancels difference and depth, and it does away with the consolation by place of which Hemingway speaks.¹⁵⁶

Just as I as a physical self "continuously regenerate and realize the network of processes (relations) that produced [me]."¹⁵⁷ My ideas of self and my continual performance of that self are situated and made temporal by my current understanding of the interstanding of self I enter into with those others about me.

I cannot see myself as others see me, they cannot see me as I do, nor can either I or the other even see what we are seeing because we co-create the performance or the enactment of "self." I cannot be separated from the aesthetics¹⁵⁸ of my face, my voice, my choice of clothing, my thoughts about these things, or the thoughts of others about what they see and hear and smell when they look in my direction.

The French artist, ORLAN, dedicated a body of work, *Carnal Art*, to the aesthetics of appearance. "Carnal Art transforms the body into language, reversing the biblical idea of the word made flesh; the flesh is made word. Only the voice of ORLAN

¹⁵⁵ Gerhard Hoffmann, *From Modernism to Postmodernism: Concepts and Strategies of Postmodern American Fiction*. (Amsterdam, New York: Rodopi, 2005) p. 366.

¹⁵⁶ Hoffmann, p. 366.

¹⁵⁷ Maturana and Varela. p. 79.

¹⁵⁸ as in the discourse surrounding Kant's "judgment of taste" in *Critique of Judgment*.

remains unchanged."¹⁵⁹ And in the same idea of reversal she has dedicated this body of work by literally dedicating her body to the work. Carnal Art consists of a series of plastic surgeries which the artist has had performed to change her appearance in a mirroring of five well known historical art works. She was given the chin of Botticelli's "Venus," the nose of Jean-Léon Gérôme's "Psyche," the lips of François Boucher's "Europa," the eyes of "Diana" from a sixteenth-century French School of Fontainebleau painting and the forehead of Leonardo da Vinci's "Mona Lisa." ORLAN chose these female subjects of art, "not for the canons of beauty they represent... but rather on account of the stories associated with them."¹⁶⁰ Diana because she is inferior to all male gods but champion of the goddesses; Mona Lisa for the anti-beauty she represents; the frail and vulnerable Psyche; Venus for carnal beauty; Europa for her adventurous outlook. The surgeries were filmed and broadcast in Centre Georges Pompidou and the Sandra Gehring Gallery in New York. ORLAN's statements are extremely made but are understandable as comments on the aesthetics (and politics) of appearance.

So my appearance is performative in the sense of an "utterance" that calls into being in the instance of being made. I cannot help but call Marlowe into being via the aesthetics of my appearance. So too is my appearance a sort of performative inquiry, a seeking through doing and being and creating as a move with personalities and actualizing within the audience of my appearance. My appearance is performative in that it is my most public declaration and public action of my identity.

In the classroom this performance of self may be the seamless projection of teacher as a professional role as understood in the social milieu of public and post-secondary education. It may also be touched by my own preferences and choices or by the realities of budgets for clothing and social norms of propriety. But in the end the act of performing "teacher" is a kind of declaration of character and a plea for a certain type of acceptance. The idea of teaching as a performance I engage is explored in "The Hair Story" and its analysis in later chapters).

¹⁵⁹ ORLAN, *Manifesto of Carnal Art* <http://www.orlan.net/texts/> Accessed May 21, 2010.

¹⁶⁰ ORLAN. *Ibid.*

Politics of Appearance

As someone who has a name that our society does not immediately assign to a gender, I have had a few experiences that give me some small insights into the politics of appearance particularly as it affects gender. For a variety of reasons, I have always been interested in gender politics. Part of that stems from my hermaphroditic name; part of it stems from being a single father at a time when only 0.9% of children in Canada lived only with a father; part of it arises from being denied a single parent grant because I was not a woman; part of it comes from having daughters whom I wish would not be subject to gender discrimination. The other part arises from the many interactions I have witnessed in gender informed classroom interactions where social norms, some very uncomfortable, push students into gender roles that do not seem suited to their personalities or desires.

With some colleagues I participated in the creation of lesson aids under the auspices of a provincial gender equity grant with the support of the BCTF. One of our packages was nominated and won a publishing award. I was telephoned by a representative of the publishing company who was seeking to obtain material for the biography that would accompany the award announcement. We spoke for a few minutes and she asked me how I became interested in gender issues. I related the preceding list and she relaxed noticeably later confessing she had been sure from my name that she must have been phoning a woman but encountered a voice which she could not reconcile with that gender assignment. Just as our bodies superficially announce our identity so too do our voices.

But while I have some very small insights into the aesthetics of politics, they are kept personally small because I am male and I pass for white.¹⁶¹ A few silly confusions and mail addressed to me as Ms. Irvine are hardly worth mentioning next to the kind of experiences my female, aboriginal, and transgender friends have faced. I carry the

¹⁶¹ As previously described in footnote 126 my assumed role as a person with white skin seems to me less "myself" than my identity as a person of indigenous identity.

backpack of white male privilege,¹⁶² is a kind of mask that protects me from so much. "The actors in Greek tragedies always wore masks, thus telegraphing to the audience the 'artificial' nature of the art."¹⁶³ And my genetic claim to Western European origins feels like that sort of mask to me but I do not think many of my audience notice the extent to which I "only wear" whiteness.

"All meaningful discourse seeks to end appearances... this is its attraction, and its imposture. It is also an impossible undertaking."¹⁶⁴ As much as we strive and desire to make it otherwise, appearance is as political now as it has ever been, perhaps more so. When America elects a black president his skin colour is now incorporated into the reception of his argument. When I make a comment about aboriginal issues, I am seen to have appropriated a stance because I look white. My truth is in my appearance as much as it is in my words.

Pedagogy of Appearance

As a teacher I have to be aware, also, of what my appearance teaches others. I do not refer only to "setting a good example," or "dressing appropriately for a school environment. I take Heidegger's notions of "being in" and "dwelling in" as essential attributes of coming to perform self in a pedagogic sense; a reality co-created by myself and my audience/students. I shape and frame a canvas: clothes I chose for effect, my concentration not to stutter, colognes, a running appearance regimen of mask and costume mixed on the palette of my height, skin colour and of course, my hair.

Heidegger's idea of "being in" is of particular interest in that it opens for the *dasein*, for me as a writer, a place before intention in the world. Until I stepped into the role of *dasein*, consciously aware of having always been there, the ontic, the factual existence, of me that confronted me was all that there was. What I needed was a way to

¹⁶² Peggy McIntosh, "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Backpack" [electronic resource] <http://www.isr.umich.edu/home/diversity/resources/white-privilege.pdf>. Accessed February 13, 2013.

¹⁶³ W. Edward Brown in J. Parini, p. 63.

¹⁶⁴ Jean Baudrillard, *Seduction*. trans. Brian Singer (Montreal: New World Perspectives Culture Texts Series, 2001) p. 54.

move from a solely ontic awareness to something more akin to an examination, understanding, or discourse with the ontological aspects of my being. But this seems a circularity impossible to escape when there is not a way to examine my thoughts of being from outside that being.

This is my central and intractable problem, which I will address through applying externally grounded "technique" to internally generated ideas about being. I must tell the story of being and then ask myself, to be the critic of the story. The advantage I will seek to gain through the application of ideas in close reading draws from my experience teaching my own verse, as described earlier on pages 49 to 53. Aspects of the performance, the pedagogic narrative, the script of the performance, once it is fixed, provide insights into the thoughts behind the performance. As carefully chosen as the words of the script are, they reveal the thoughts from which the script draws sometimes without the author's intention, as they did with Jennifer VII as the seed for this dissertation's idea of literary analysis of self-written narrative.

I attempt a self-analysis based on a literary analysis of a personal narrative within a post-structuralist paradigm, but that seems as artificial to me as the idea of an "objective" view of self. A future stage of my research must surely be to discuss these ideas and those states of self and the terrible beauty¹⁶⁵ that is the formation of a teacher from the almost teacher of pre-training through the analysis of the narratives of others. I would also like to pursue the notion of close reading and literary analysis applied to myself as teacher as well, in the future, to narratives of teachers who have engaged in their own narrative inquiry within a teacher inquiry question regardless of where in their careers they may be. But can I do those stories the justice that they deserve, the justice that I feel mine deserves, until I have honed my narrative analysis technique, my ability to see the situatedness of my own story, my ability to be "after theory"¹⁶⁶ until my narrative and my reaction to it is complete? I see now that my earlier, less informed story

¹⁶⁵ from *A Terrible Beauty*, Jill and Leon Uris's book of photographs. The metaphor of a shattered self image underlying a pristine and beautiful other-image that was the Ireland I visited in 1979 haunted my development as a teacher in 1980.

¹⁶⁶ from Terry Eagleton *After Theory* in which Eagleton argues that after the excellent critical theorizing of the postmodern period there must still be some commonality of experience in people from which the further work of application of theory might derive.

telling and development of a personal aesthetic might have been a real and dynamic part of a kind of curriculum of self if I had been aware of such ideas at the time.

The Interstood Performances

When John Watson began his work on the performative nature of utterances he was principally concerned with the first of my only subtly discernable ideas about the performative.¹⁶⁷ He was intending the idea of "performative" as "to call something into being" such as the claiming of a new body of land as the property of a sovereign nation, never mind the intentions of its inhabitants. He soon came to a theory of "speech acts," which remind us that in a performative utterance we not only recognize or declare but we actually create. We make a nation, or a concept or even a person "become" by declaring them present and nameable.

In *On Grammatology*, Derrida extends this idea and shows that the naming also alters both the meaning and the existence of the "thing named" by creating additional iterations, drawing on and redefining past utterances, creating the field for future ones. Judith Butler, from whom I draw ideas on the performative nature of gender identity reminds us that we do not perform gender identities once, but continuously and ritualistically.¹⁶⁸ Butler would see the physician's declaration of a newborn's gender identity, reliant as it is on the conventions which imbue it with power, as, perhaps, less significant than the child, as all of us, being continually re-pronounced, re-performed, in an illocutionary fashion, into our singular and various roles. So immersed are we in the role, often writing the script and performing as we go, we can fail to understand the nuances of the performance and interactions among its constituent parts without a mechanism for insight, such as a close reading — after the curtain has closed.

You were declared and continually are declared, you are assessed and continually will be assessed, by your performed style, by those utterances, which recognize it and re-iterate it; by the way you wear your self; and so will I. I have explored

¹⁶⁷ John Watson, *How to Do things with Words*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962)

¹⁶⁸ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. (New York: Routledge, 1999), p. xv.

the appearance and re-appearance of my performative "self" through narratives of my hair. In doing so I shall introduce a way of being in inquiry and drawing upon self-reflections arising from literary analysis of my own narrative, performative inquiry, narrative inquiry, teacher inquiry, hermeneutics, phenomenology and literary critique for my theoretical underpinning my attempt to interstand my own narrative. In classrooms the "self" is performed constantly and simultaneously by the teacher as well as by the students and other participants. Those performances both planned and spontaneous, individual and group become part of the understandings and interstandings of the classroom. For this reason these performances are pedagogical and call for study in the intersecting fields of narrative inquiry, performative inquiry and teacher inquiry.

Narrating and Being Narrated

Narrative inquiry takes many forms, and while I will be pursuing a particular form, the pedagogic narrative, it is situated within the wide and diverse tradition of narrative inquiry in the social sciences and in education. As such it serves as an informative touchpoint within teacher inquiry. The similarities between what I intend to do and narrative inquiry seen as a whole, are many; the differences to be explored in the next two chapters center around the narrative of self and further the application of ideas and techniques within literary analysis as an added discourse to the ideas within narrative inquiry.

But first narrative inquiry, as I understand it, in all its depth and beauty:

What narrative researchers [in this very diverse field] hold in common is a study of stories or narratives or descriptions of a series of events. These researchers usually embrace the assumption that the story is one if not the fundamental unit that accounts for human experience.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁹ Stefinee Pinnegar and J. Gary Daynes, "Locating Narrative Inquiry Historically," *Handbook of Narrative Inquiry*. ed. Jean Clandinin (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications Inc., 2007) p. 4.

As Charles Taylor has put it: “the basic condition of making sense of ourselves [is] that we grasp our lives in a *narrative*.”¹⁷⁰ I cannot imagine what it could be like to experience the world in discrete moments, without connection or flow or through narrative. Clive Wearing, Oliver Sack's frightening example of a person whose life has no narrative thread,¹⁷¹ seems as foreign a consciousness as it is possible to imagine. I was to have, as an interruption to the revision process for this work, some taste of that experience. In August, 2012, following an undetermined length of time with asymptomatic internal bleeding I was to utterly collapse and spend several days in a hospital trauma unit. The first of those days I experienced as only flashes and episodes, disconnected, and as incoherent as only such disconnectedness can be. I was given renewed understanding of the value in seeing life as a narrative and renewed fright at losing such an understanding. It made my father's descent into dementia before his death both understandable and intensely pathetic.

While I was exposed to philosophy of an analytic tradition in which the "narrative fallacy" — the construction of an argument using a story-like beginning, middle and conclusion — was invalid, I find it impossible to see myself as other than the conclusion to my own stories. My role as a teacher, researcher, a parent, a reader, a person, are overlapping narratives of who I am. Why would I, and how could I, ever leave that aside? Clearly, I cannot and the great contribution to my understanding of the world through my exposure to some post-modern epistemology is this very realization. And because I like who I am as a researcher, I have the desire to include my narratives. Trying in some mean-spirited parody of Clive Wearing's life to forget in this moment, what I carry from the last in some attempt at objectivity denies access to the rich and swirling set of events that brought me to this point and to perform time and again.

But as one who enjoys narrative and biography, I need to consider how my actions and the narratives I construct with them interact in order to understand narrative

¹⁷⁰ Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity*. (Rocklin, CA: Prima Pub, 1999) p. 47.

¹⁷¹ Brain damage from disease left Clive Wearing with no ability to remember events even a very short time after they happened. see Oliver Sacks, *Musophilia: Tales of Music and the Brain* (Toronto: Knopf, 2007).

inquiry as a methodology is "first and foremost a way of thinking about experience,"¹⁷² just as literary analysis is a way to think about and through a story, a narrative, or many other forms of literature in the widest uses of that idea. Telling my own life-history is not a completely comfortable exercise, considering where I have come from and what I have come through, but it is around the reading of the story I have told, after it has been written, that I feel real insight lies.

As a qualitative researcher, I don't want to forget about that "quality" part of the adjective. I want both the quality of my narrative to be good and the reliability and validity of my research to be high. Who better, in some real sense, to examine narrative of the researcher's life than the researcher? Who better to see the effect of the story on the storyteller than the tale weaver himself provided that he then take the time to be critical, to be analytical, and to seek insights from without as well as within? Who better to understand the artist's portrayal of himself as artist?

Leah Fowler's *Curriculum of Difficulty: Narrative Research in Education and the Practice of Teaching*¹⁷³ is a resource for those, like me, who seek to make a serious investigation into what it is we do in the classroom as set into and against the realms of qualitative research methodologies. Narrative inquiry as a method for researching practice dwells within the stories we tell of ourselves as practicing professionals, and as researchers. Fowler intersperses her research ideas, suggestions, advice and discoveries with her own "internarratives" of her life in a "do-as-I-say, and-as-I-do" example of the rich, potentially challenging exercise to "reconnect theory with practice, academia with inspiration, and the teacher with the researcher"¹⁷⁴

Fowler pays close attention to teacher identity and to the tendency she and others, including myself, see that humans make sense of their experiences and

¹⁷² F.M. Connelly and D.J. Clandinin, "Narrative Inquiry," *Handbook of Complementary Methods in Education Research, 3rd Ed.*, eds. J. L. Green, G. Camilli, and P. Elmore, pp. 477–487 (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2006) p. 477.

¹⁷³ *A Curriculum of Difficulty: Narrative Research in Education and the Practice of Teaching.* (New York: Peter Lang International Academic Publishers, 2006.)

¹⁷⁴ Lisa A. Mitchell, "What's Your Story? A Book Review of Leah Fowler's *A Curriculum of Difficulty: Narrative Research in Education and the Practice of Teaching* (2006)" In *Education* Vol 16, No 2 (2010), p. 2.

construct their identities through narrative. Questions that arise in a teaching life arise because we are human:

Embodied, physical and psychological teaching beings ask: *Who* in the world am I by now? *Where* am I and how did I get here? How do I go on from here? What interpretations can I make of my professional being and practice? How can I move into a mature, meaningful, aware, compassionate, knowledgeable, effective teaching being? How do I remain present amid difficulty?¹⁷⁵

Fowler suggests that these questions are answered through engagement in narrative inquiry, but she reminds us that narrative inquiry is not an "easy" type of research when engaged in ethically and professionally.

The curriculum of difficulty for the teacher requires the activity of deep, committed engagement, no matter the difficulties that naturally arise in the course of time and being. Narrative research is one way to rethink and rewrite the educational narrative I live as a teacher, toward new and poetic images of self that at once startle and teach, challenge and satisfy, entice and create meaning.¹⁷⁶

Fowler suggests that within the labour of conducting narrative inquiry researchers need to have rigour and reliability. Narrative research could be conducted using "orbitals of engagement"¹⁷⁷ which would allow us to act ethically and purposefully in our research into practice. These orbitals are: "Naive storying"—the finding of language to tell of an experience; "Psychological re/construction"—the recognition of the emotion and thought of the story; "Psychotherapeutic ethics"—which requires that narrative inquirers face our own "potential for harm";¹⁷⁸ "Narrative craft"—the finding of the unity of the story; "Hermeneutic philosophy"—the undercurrent of meanings and interpretations in the

¹⁷⁵ L. Fowler, p. 12.

¹⁷⁶ L. Fowler, p. 151.

¹⁷⁷ L. Fowler, p. 30-31.

¹⁷⁸ L. Fowler, p. 30.

story; "Curriculum pedagogy"—that which "can be learned and known about teaching from the narrative data"¹⁷⁹; and the "Poetics of teaching"—the moment of learning that "unveils truth and beauty in education. It is a feeling of knowing something worthwhile and mattering in the world."¹⁸⁰ As she reads and rereads her own narratives Fowler unpacks them through the awareness of these orbitals.

Having written and rewritten a story Fowler next reads and

In first readings of a story, during first losses of innocence, unlighted places emerge, danger points un-hide, signposts are constructed. I am propelled into more intense confrontations with subconscious intentions, needs, and motives that begin to reveal themselves. Both in the text written and in writing the text, I question my own ethics as the storyteller and the storied.¹⁸¹

Her next steps are to return to the story conscious of her seven orbitals, to draw out the significance of the intentions, needs, and motives into which she has been driven. For example, the "naive storying orbital is one of the first places within the force field of narrative to see what others say and do in relation to the self, to notice the other characters in our lived narratives, and to negotiate life in community in a humane way."¹⁸² As she continues to engage in the narrative within all of the orbitals Fowler finds the place of her narrative in her research and in her life as a teacher.

Leah Fowler offers narrative researchers an analytic frame for examination of teacher narratives. This frame recognizes the spirit and practice of the importance of engaging in an analysis of one's narratives or the narratives of others through close reading. Identifying and embracing literary is what I offer and engage in through my inquiry.

¹⁷⁹ L. Fowler, p. 31.

¹⁸⁰ L. Fowler, p. 31.

¹⁸¹ L. Fowler, p. 42.

¹⁸² L. Fowler, p. 44.

Approaching Narrative Inquiry

The form of narrative inquiry I am embracing is not only unique to me in the way that any inquiry, perhaps particularly a deeply personal inquiry, is unique to an inquirer, my narrative research is also unique in that I bring to my work the flavour of a literary background. Long before I began the process of developing and then refining an approach to the analysis of narrative as informed by traditional close reading, I was immersed in the world of literary criticism.

Narrative inquiry approaches story both as a learning and as a meta-learning. The concepts and knowledges of narratology: plotline, character, theme, setting, and situatedness are used to discover and then to rediscover, through something like deconstruction, what the narrative, the writer/speaker, and audience bring to this story.

Thus, we say that people by nature lead storied lives and tell stories of those lives, whereas narrative researchers describe such lives, collect and tell stories of them, and write narratives of experience¹⁸³.

Narrative inquiry began with attempts by sociologists and anthropologists to use life history as a method for exploring and gaining embedded insights into social and cultural contexts¹⁸⁴. As narrative inquiry continued to evolve as a methodology, its perceived value was of particular power in studying the lives of women in feminist writings¹⁸⁵ and in therapy as a method for family support.¹⁸⁶ It soon became clear to those working in education that this powerful technique, narrative as a form of discursive inquiry, could lead to new and deeper insights in pedagogy. Researchers using narrative must deal with questions about representation and interpretation, about relation between

¹⁸³ D. J. Clandinin and F. M. Connelly, "Teachers' Professional Knowledge Landscapes: Teacher Stories. Stories of Teachers. School Stories. Stories of Schools," *Educational Researcher*, Vol. 25, No. 3 (Apr., 1996) pp. 24-30 p. 29.

¹⁸⁴ W. I. Thomas and F. Znaniecki, *The Polish Peasant in Europe and America*. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1927) and L. Langless and G. Frank. *Lives: An Anthropological Approach to Biography*. (Novato: Chandler and Sharp: 1981)

¹⁸⁵ M. F. Belenkey, B. M. Clinchy, N. R. Golbergerand, and K. M. Tarule, *Women's Ways of Knowing: the Development of Self, Voice, and Mind*. (New York: Basic Books, 1986)

¹⁸⁶ White and Epston, *Narrative Means to Therapeutic Ends*.

story and "reality", and are often questioned and challenged regarding sample size and bias. Rather than undermine the power and value of narrative inquiry, these questions lend it strength as these are questions researchers engaging in narrative inquiry have addressed and theorized about.

One of the first challenges that narrative researchers must deal with is the very question of what narrative is. Traditionally, narratives are continuous, usually chronological, threads of thought presented as constructed stories, which create or are created by the narrator who has "experienced" those events. In narrative inquiry the composer relates events either as they are thought to have happened, in the event of realistic¹⁸⁷ narrative, or as they could be imagined to happen as in fictional narrative. It is the points of contact or interstices between realistic and fictional that I will rely on in an attempt to join together ideas are gaining insight into fictional narratives with ideas and to gain insight into what we might call realistic ones.

Susan Chase in a chapter on narrative inquiry¹⁸⁸ outlines five "analytic" lenses that are at once unique to narrative inquiry and overlap with other qualitative methods. She looks to the work of Bruner and others to demonstrate that narrative makes meaning for the narrator. The creation of a narrative is a way of reexamining the past, and describing how the present, for the narrator, came to be. Narratives are also, according to Chase, a doing, an accomplishment, an action. The third analytic lens for narrative inquirers is the lens that situates the inquiry in the narrator's social and cultural world. An additional lens might be thought to be one of performance created because of this situating; there is an audience and the narrative is constructed by its composer in response to and for this particular audience. Lastly, the narrative is as much about the researcher using narrative as a form of inquiry as the narrator who composes it; the research is situated in the narrative.

¹⁸⁷ I use realistic here in its literary sense of describing events which had physical and temporal existence.

¹⁸⁸ Susan E. Chase "Narrative Inquiry: Multiple Lenses, Approaches, Voice" *Collecting And Interpreting Qualitative Materials* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publishing, 2008)

Each of these lenses of inquiry, performative, narrative, pedagogical, literary analytical is of particular significance to "The Hair Narrative" especially when viewed as a pedagogic story. Meaning making, the sense in which artifacts of memory are tied together in an attempt to understand both the artefact and its relation to others is central to "The Hair Narrative". The photographs of the young me, memories of teachers, names and behaviors of friends and lovers exist as threads woven into a tapestry of the completed narrative. None of these could stand alone and still be made sense of within a continuum of a life. It would be like looking at a collection of family photos from a family with which one had no relationship. While each photograph might be interesting in and for itself, the family as a functioning entity would give up its identity and meaning in the lack of time and narrative used to bind the photographs together.

When one constructs a narrative that joins the photographs together, recounting past events, one possible path to the narrator's present is constructed. As author of the hair performance as well as the narrative's script that became the narrative of chapter three; there was more than a little examination and "coming to terms" with discrete events in my past. The commitment to digital paper of "The Hair Narrative" led to a somewhat therapeutic understanding how I came to be the person who constructed, was able to construct, the narrative of the hair. Each event, each person, each photograph was reexamined, and its significance, its reason for being remembered, was decided on, rejected, elaborated, changed, or allowed to remain hidden.

In some instances, the contribution of one artifact to the narrative was of such significance that the entire story leading to it had to be put aside, its outcomes never shared. Sometimes this was done in the interest of time, but more often because of the pain that the story of the artifact brought to me. At other times an instance might be rejected because the joy it brought. For me as a performer, personal joy was sometimes even more difficult to share than pain. But the joy and the pain, the included and the excluded, all told the story of my becoming the person who performed. Some of those now hidden bits are lost. Others not lost, or buried too deeply to bring to a conscious memory, are still part of the narrative that led to me as I perceive and perform my self, and may well be made visible in my analysis of the narrative, which is to come. One way

of finding those pieces may be through an attempt at a new form of analytic approach to self-history, or self narration, which I explore in chapters six and seven.

Creating the Narrative for Inquiry

The construction of the narrative is also very much a doing and undoing; a making of new understandings of self and an unmaking of previous understandings. And in Dewey's sense that "learning is by doing," a great deal of self awareness was created in the initial performance of "The Hair Narrative" and in its concretizing onto paper. Particularly in this last act, a summer spent wrestling with what was originally intended only to be performed in the moment on to paper, I lost one voice, one way of sharing "The Hair Narrative", and gained another. The fixing of the narrative into a less fluid shape changed not just its existence, but my understanding of what it meant to make a narrative of "self". Particular versions of "self", particular aspects of who I thought I was as well as who I thought I should be to an audience, swam into focus or disappeared into another place. The change in the medium changed the narration and changed the narrator both in the sense of awareness of self and of identity as self.

This creation of the narrative as an active process also moves the story away from the history that that narrative purports to report. When the hair story was a performance, when I was performing, questions were few; the actor, me, it seems, rarely invites requests for insight. Perhaps it was just that many of the students, trained by years of schooling not to interrupt maintained their questions within. When the narrative became fixed to the paper, however, questions within me, particularly about events not included, were common and even routine.

A narrative inquiry situates itself and situates for us the narrative in the social, cultural, and historical and discourses within the narrator's awareness. The milieu in which the narrator operates is at once constraining, enriching, and expanding of the narrator's place in those discourses. That is, the promises and potentials, restrictions and restraints, patterns and problems of the setting in which the narrator constructs the narrative are deeply imbedded in the material and composition of the narrative. The reality of the narrative reflects all of the atmosphere in which the narrator works, it also

explores new possibilities for that atmosphere and for the narrator's position within it. This idea encourages comparisons and contrasts to be examined among the narratives that the author has been exposed to as part of the atmosphere in which he or she works.

In the case of this hair narrative, a close reading is, to some extent freed from having to justify apparent comparisons to some of the greatest works of the literary canon. If, during a literary analysis of this narrative, I indulge in comparison to Shakespeare or Baudelaire, or Tolstoy it is not an attempt to a claim of "high" literature but rather a creation or recreation of an atmosphere in which the narrative was constructed. Rich in the canon of western literature, poor in so many other literary traditions, lacking awareness of some aspects of social history, hopelessly mired in others, this hair narrative is as much about the atmosphere in which it was created and the freedoms and limits of that atmosphere¹⁸⁹ as it is about the events with which the narrative is constructed.

There is a very central role for the audience, and I would suggest spectator, in this narrative and in its analysis. Particularly with its genesis as a performance piece for students' interaction with the audience/spectators was really felt even if those interactions were not always active. The performance piece on which "The Hair Narrative" is based was jointly created in the pedagogic performance. That performance became intended to teach of the self and the relation of the self and other. When the performance began to move onto digital paper, interaction with the audience shifted but of course did not disappear. On one hand there was the imagined reader for whom I selected, created, and embellished events within the narrative. At various times I imagine speaking (since I used voice recognition for the entire creation of the story) to a particular person. Interestingly not the same person for all sections but people, from my life, and sometimes from literature, to whom I felt I wanted to explain myself. My actual grade three teacher, in the section about the band-aid in my pocket;¹⁹⁰ I spoke to my

¹⁸⁹ I have always tried to see the classroom as an atmosphere, all encompassing, potentially either healthful or injurious, atmosphere into which my students enter. See "Teacher I" page 14.

¹⁹⁰ "The Hair Narrative," lines 105-122. I actually had once put a band-aid on top a piece of glass in my hand in those days of glass glue bottles. I know that the teacher I showed it to must have been confused and somehow I still want to clarify.

close adolescent male friends about the afro period,¹⁹¹ to my older daughter here, to my younger daughter there, to colleagues, students, friends. Because I did not work from a script the narrative was not consistent and there are no records of the how and when of the changes.

While many of those people have never and will never read "The Hair Narrative" those who do read the story of my relationship with my hair co-construct a new narrative with me when they read it. The audience seeking interstandings with the author of which the author may never be aware. This very much is the joy and new possibility of close reading when applied to any piece of literature. An author writing in the post- structuralist awareness of the idea of co-construction of meaning in the experience of the reading of text, such as myself, attempts to embed certain ideas in a narrative, which might well disappear in the process of co-construction. A particular reader might bring to the constructed meaning ideas that I would not see as supportable but which are, because they are included within the text, or evoked by the text. In order to see some of those ideas that have been placed there at odds with or next to ideas I intended to include, I have chosen to use literary analysis techniques. Through literary analysis, I propose, some ideas that were added outside the author's awareness may be discovered by any reader, just as they were by my sharing with my students an analysis of the poem Jennifer VII. And as Susan Chase points out, the narrative and its analysis is as much about myself as researcher using narrative and analysis as it is about the narrative itself.

And so I will narrate the analysis of the narration, speak my way through my growing understanding of the hair story that comes through analyzing "The Hair Narrative." The act of analyzing makes meaning and makes meaning fresh for me, as a researcher into myself. I examine the past act of recording the narrative, fixing it onto paper, which helps me to understand in new ways how it seemed to be who I am now. The act of creating embedded as it is in my present social, historical, and cultural world becomes part of those worlds, and a new understanding of the atmosphere in which I work. In writing my dissertation, I create a new relationship with a new audience or set of

¹⁹¹"The Hair Narrative", Lines 310-347.

audiences, who in turn, in the aftermath, impact my understanding of myself in relationship with those I encounter, in life, and through this dissertation.

Teaching and Teaching Teacher Inquiry

Teacher III

I rebel, inside,
at having to use that
palette knife that business demands
and press layers of oily consumerism onto
their hopes for a place, in society,
they can love.
But parents create the market.
Can my work survive
if I don't?
And the materials they give me...
often the dulllest inks,
the oldest, leakiest instruments,
seem to need a tune.
(Well, not everything.
Donne tolls as clearly as from St. Paul's,
Blake still etches cleanly his distinctions,
Dickens can make the music of giggles,
when you brush off the dust.
And Shakespeare,
Shakespeare can split the marble to the heart
every time.)
Some melodies, are bright, and vibrant,
on a worn palette.
I work in a public studio, a public artist.
Hmmpphf

Marlowe Irvine

The Inquirer's Data

Having worked with pre-service and practicing teachers and practiced teacher in professional qualifying programs, graduate diploma programs in education, and Masters of Education in Educational Practice programs I have taught teacher inquiry as well as

engaged in it myself. I approach teacher inquiry with my graduate students by deliberately comparing and contrasting it with the empirical methods of research that many of my students see as the dominant paradigm of knowledge generation and exploration.¹⁹² I try to demonstrate that teacher inquiry draws from the strength of an analytical approach to practice and can be enhanced with approaches that have entered the spheres of educational research that are not tied to laboratory experimentation. I would like to invite you to consider some of the interplay between empirical scientific methods and teacher inquiry.

Many of the most energizing, exciting and informative aspects of engaging in teacher inquiry¹⁹³ are that you have to bracket off some of what you learned about doing research if you had been, like me, involved in the experimental sciences. On the other hand, teacher inquiry shares with scientific kinds of research such as those used in chemistry, central aspects of investigation of a knowledge field. I would like to begin a look at the role of teacher inquiry in my practice and within the analysis of my narrative as both a practitioner and instructor in teacher inquirer programs, by looking at some forms of data collection in teacher inquiry. We will see that the discourses around "data" become richer and move into territories not always invoked by that word. Data, for a teacher inquirer, is not very often a column of statistics; instead it is the experience of the classroom with all of its richness.

In the experimental sciences one begins by gathering data. Observations, weights, numbers, temperatures, pressures, and even observation-based anecdotes become grist for the mill of the scientist's mind. Categories are created, patterns are sought, discrepancies explored, texts consulted, theories applied, and explorations

¹⁹² This approach also helps alleviate some of the felt anxiety teachers may encounter when confronting research "jargon." See Nancy Fichtman Dana and Diane Yendol-Hoppey. *The Reflective Educator's Guide to Classroom Research: Learning to Teach and Teaching to Learn Through Practitioner Inquiry*. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, 2003) p. 118.

¹⁹³ A great deal of what follows in this chapter has been informed by the scholars of teacher inquiry, its practitioners and its students whom I have encountered while working in Simon Fraser University's Faculty of Education Field Programs and Professional Development Programs over 23 years. The influences of these people have become so much a way of my being as a teacher that specific references to the genesis, in me, of any particular idea have proven impossible. I have included, I believe, all of their published work with which I am familiar, in my references section.

undertaken. When I was first teaching science in the secondary classroom the examination of "real world" data was the step most often ignored. The data were a science textbook and the categories, patterns, problems and theories were presented whole and need only be returned in forms such as answers on a quiz or sentences in a lab report.

The idea that data come ready-made with all conclusions predetermined, as is experienced in the typical high school science lab, is the very antithesis of scientific inquiry, but this recipe lab work is what I initially implemented as a science teacher in my school science classes. Sadly, I taught scientific method in this fashion despite having had some excellent instruction in the "doing" of science. As a university student, I had become "hooked" in the biology lab when instructed to combine sea urchin eggs and sperm and observe. Of course, I knew what would "happen," and it did and didn't happen. I found myself overstaying the lab time by more than three hours my eyes glued to a stereoscopic microscope watching cell division; I was awe struck. I clearly remember that joyous feeling of watching life progress and imagining how it must have been for those first observers of this process. I was also a first observer and my understanding of what would be happening and had happened did nothing to dampen my excitement. But the experience of observing, searching the world for data that would generate questions to answer, was something I only described to my Science 10 and Biology 11 students; they never experienced that type of scientific observation themselves in my classroom.

That saddens me as the teacher I am today. After having framed the teacher inquiry question I related in Chapter One, "How can I change my practice in science classes to engage me as much as my practice in Language Arts classes always has?", data gathering moved out of the pre-packaged world of curriculum and into the world of lived experience. I do wish I could say I repeated the sea urchin reproduction experience with my students but unfortunately I didn't do so. However, new opportunities arose. As one example, I was fortunate enough to be contacted by a retired UBC professor¹⁹⁴ who was seeking to study a root rot fungus in the South Surrey Urban Forest. He spoke to

¹⁹⁴ I wish I could remember his name, if only to provide a suitable pseudonym.

my sciences Co-op (English 11, Chemistry 11, and Biology 11) class about the then current lack of understanding of the nature of the spread of root rot in the forests. He explained that forestry practices were being changed in order to prevent the spread of the fungus but no data had ever been collected on the mechanism of that spread. The students peppered him with questions and his most frequent response was, "We don't know. That's what I want to find out." Within weeks, my grade 11 class was tromping through the urban forest with note paper, tape measures and some instruction on how to identify affected trees and my Co-op classes did so every February for the next four years. They were gathering raw data. The data the students gathered was relatively straightforward: Here is a tree so many meters from another tree also showing, or not showing, sign of root fungus. We imagined that if we were careful and plotted these distance's entries on a map we would have additional data from which to speculate and form new questions.

The difficulty in teacher inquiry is that defining and locating data among the great sea of inputs and outputs that teachers encounter in every moment of the school day is an overwhelming task. I often quote Barney Glaser to my teacher inquiry classes:

"All is data" is a well known Glaser dictum. What does it mean? It means that exactly what is going on in the research scene is the data, what ever the source, whether interview, observations, documents. It is not just what is being, how it is being and the conditions of its being told, but all the data surrounding what is being told.¹⁹⁵

And I do so to help teacher inquiry students to separate between laboratory type data, where controlled conditions control the data stream and the messier realm of classroom "data." Something that might not affect a laboratory setting such as the season's first snow, might engender a massive new data flow in a grade four classroom. There simply is a potentially overwhelming amount of measurable and immeasurable data with which to cope. Teacher inquiry, like action research described by Judith Newman, "begins not

¹⁹⁵ Barney Glaser, "All is Data," *Grounded Theory Review*. Posted on Mar 30, 2007 in Issue no.2, March 2007, Volume 06 <http://groundedtheoryreview.com/2007/03/30/1194/>. Accessed September 8, 2011.

with a research question but with the muddle of daily work, with the moments that stand out from the general flow."¹⁹⁶ How will we ever generate the succeeding questions when there is too much unsorted data for us to formulate the initial question that inspires the inquiry? But I also remind students that this large potential data set, in addition to being the reality of their professional lives, need not be considered as a whole. Rather, the question is to how to attend to a moment that

tugs on our sleeve, a moment that arrests our habits of engagement, a moment within which horizons shift, and we experience our situation anew. [This] stop occurs when we come to see or experience things, events, or relationships from a different perspective or understanding; a stop is a moment that calls us to mindful awareness.¹⁹⁷

Very often my teacher inquiry students propose large and unwieldy questions designed to please others or to deal with changes they are told to expect. If, instead they can be called to mindful awareness of their own practice teacher inquiry projects become more manageable and far more personally and professionally informative.

The Inquirer's Question

In my experience working with teachers enrolled in professional development and practice-based inquiry programs for nineteen years the formation of an inquiry question is the foundational problem to the new teacher inquirer. "What am I studying?," they may ask. If I simply say "my practice" I am being completely accurate and desperately unhelpful. If I say categories, patterns, and theoretical applications to narrow the range of data to examine, I allow more freedom within the inquiry but may leave the un-initiated teacher struggling with too much to consider. My strategy has been two-fold: I suggest either that students gather the data of the discrepancies, difficulties, rubs,

¹⁹⁶ Judith Newman, "Action Research: Exploring the Tensions of Teaching" *Tensions of Teaching*. (Toronto: Canadian Scholars Press, 1998) p. 3.

¹⁹⁷ Lynn Fels, "Coming into Presence: The Unfolding of a Moment." *Journal of Educational Controversy*, 5(1). Bellingham, Washington: Western Washington University. <http://www.wce.wvu.edu/Resources/CEP/eJournal/v005n001/a020.shtml>. Accessed August 28, 2014.

stops, or disappointments of their practice (such as my disappointment in my performance as a science teacher) or that they gather the data of the alignments, successes, achievements, or praise of their practice (such as my feelings of hope and success as a language arts teacher). The nature of that data is also dependent on the professional situation of the teacher and I will examine the close tie between the individual teacher's situation and the types of data they encounter more closely in the coming section of this chapter regarding the response to the research question.

One continues, in a scientific experiment, by framing a question arising from the data, the hypothesis. A hypothesis needs to be a statement about the empirical world that is testable, and significant. Teacher inquiry also begins with a question, one that is testable, examinable, and perhaps even answerable.

Nothing shapes our research as much as the questions we ask. In the last two years, more teachers are investigating our own classrooms with our own students, recognizing that finding and asking those questions are a natural — and vital — part of the way that we make sense to the teaching and learning in our classrooms.¹⁹⁸

The question is about the world of the teacher's practice. The weight of the teacher inquiry question is in its significance to the teacher in his or her practice. The inquiry question must be something of importance to the teacher, his or her students, and the pedagogy experienced by those involved. So it was with my first teacher inquiry question related in chapter one, although that original inquiry question was formulated long before I ever encountered this term "teacher inquiry." My teaching practice, my identity as a teacher, the learning environment of the classroom, and the pedagogical tools on that I relied were all hampered by my failure to see that the foundations upon which I taught in English language arts classes as opposed to science classes were separated: one based in transformation, the other based in content acquisition.

¹⁹⁸ Ruth Shagoury Hubbard & Brenda Miller Power, *Art of Classroom Inquiry: A Handbook for Teacher Researchers: Revised Edition*, (Portsmouth: Heinmann, 2003). p. 2.

It would not be until I embraced the question regarding the difference my practice as a literature, as opposed to science, teacher that I began to understand that an inquiry question based in data is central to teacher inquiry. The question provides a new set of provocations in practice and new data to consider. It may seem self-evident that a teacher's inquiry question should arise from his or her practice as that practice is conducted when she frames it. However, many teachers, in my experience as a teacher-educator, have to be encouraged to redirect their inquiry questions, toward their own practices, rather than look outside of practice toward curriculum changes arising from the central educational authority or from goals or directives from the school community to try to frame a question. Examples such as "How can I develop a social justice unit for my grade four class?" are important questions but they may not lend themselves well to teacher inquiry. Just as it may be difficult to know where to begin planning a social justice unit, how to move "beyond faddish buzzwords and rapid implementation of new teaching methods"¹⁹⁹ is often extremely difficult for busy teachers.

The inquiry that led to my first performance of "The Hair Story," although not originally framed as a teacher inquiry question, came from the data within my own awareness of who I was an individual and a teacher that my hair performance was generating. As I said in Chapter One, the initial performances of the hair story were grounded in the application of a new technique discovered in a text that accompanied a workshop. It was a response to the suggestions of another and was implemented, not for carefully examined and analyzed pedagogic reasons, but because I had found the workshop fun and thought the activities from *The Winner's Circle*" might be worth implementing.²⁰⁰ "Self Esteem" was the buzzword of the time and while self-esteem education has proven itself faddish, I was embedded in a school culture where I was teaching at the time.

The hair story as a performance proved itself to be a powerful addition to my pedagogy because it did not allow itself to remain in the world of fad and fashion. The

¹⁹⁹ Ruth Shagoury Hubbard & Brenda Miller Power, p. 4.

²⁰⁰ I decided, in fact, with a colleague and close friend who had also attended the workshop, to implement every single idea from the workshop. We both felt that we had attended too many practice enriching experiences without implementing enough of them.

movement from activity to performance, from something "done" to something considered, crafted, honed and inquired into came as I interpreted the data of the responses to the story. As I have said earlier, I initially felt that I was being laughed "at."²⁰¹ As a teacher I was not comfortable as the target for humour but at the same time I knew, because of other data that my interactions with students churned out, that their laughter had little, if any, disrespectful content. If I had framed my analysis of this data as an inquiry question at that time it would have read something like, "How should I include in my practice my own insecurities about my self as a child, adolescent and beginning and experienced teacher to prompt student examination of themselves as vulnerable but worthy?"

Having formed a scientific question/hypothesis, the laboratory researcher designs an experimental situation that will test the question gleaned from the data already available to see whether the experimental results lend further support to the hypothesis or do not. For most of my teacher inquiry students the central role of a question/hypothesis is the most comfortable of ideas that they bring to teacher inquiry from their previous experiences with science. The formation of the inquiry question may also be the most common place for stumbling. Scientific study derives much of its rigour from the controlled experiment. Only a single variable is allowed to wander or be pushed from its pre-existing state and a "control group" may be established to insure that only that one variable is causing observed results.

As I tell my students in teacher inquiry programs, the idea of a scientific control may be the best ingredient in a recipe designed to hamper teacher inquiry both in terms of efficacy but also in terms of one's ethical responsibility to students. I suggested to them that most classrooms are not controlled in anything like the sense that the ingredients in a beaker or a greenhouse nursery may be. Students are complicated and independent thinkers and actors and their interactions with one another, the physical environment of the classroom and the teacher and the experiences they bring to the class from lives outside it, are even more diverse. With so many influences on the data a "controlled variable" seems a little silly. I tell my students that large scientific studies can

²⁰¹ One of Judith Newman's "critical incidents" from *Tensions of Teaching*. p. 1.

overcome individual differences in subjects with statistical measurements, that may average result to increase reliability, but a teacher inquirer, at least hopefully, meets too few students at any given time to engage in that type of number crunching. I am not saying that mathematical examinations of small numbers is not very informative but I always encourage my teacher inquiry students to remember that the class next year will need to be studied afresh.

Controlled studies on students also may have problematic ethical considerations. First, teachers will probably not want to consider exposing students to pedagogic experiences that the teacher knows or even suspects to be detrimental. Further, if a teacher decides that a change in her practice is going to be of benefit to students she almost certainly cannot decide to implement that beneficial change with one group while denying it to a "control group," at least, I would suggest, while behaving ethically. Instead a teacher inquirer must find a balance point between the natural scientist, sociologist or anthropologist observing "natural" behaviour in an environment while filling the role of creator and manipulator of many aspects of that environment, particularly the one she wishes to study.

This balance seeking between traditional ideas from scientific research and art making as research was significant in my sharing of my own verse and performative work with students. Can I closer approach a state akin to a dispassionate observer when implementing an intrusively vulnerable narrative of self-identity with students? Can I allow analysis of a story of my inner self without moving beyond the professional limits of disclosure? My answer to these questions is a qualified "yes." That qualification is aided and informed by the use of "The Hair Narrative" and my own literary analysis of it as a part of my own teacher inquiry.

The scientific method also demands the gathering of the data from the changed situation. With teacher inquirers, data comes in innumerable forms from field notes to "kid-watching" videos. It also may come in the form of personal narrative, a practice I encouraged all of the teacher inquirers with whom I worked to consider. Many wrote narratives emboldened by the apparent ease with which story comes to us as narrating

beings.²⁰² But just as the gathering of data is not the laboratory scientists' last step, teacher inquirers must also "analyze" that data.

The analysis of the data that a teacher gathers in response to a teacher inquiry question may be informed by the personality and preferences of the teacher. The inquiry question in the model I embrace, must be about the teacher and the teacher's practice, and this gives flexibility to the teacher but also increased responsibility to use techniques for analysis that have demonstrated rigour. The teacher might examine the data for the "noticings" and then code those examples of practice in a coding mechanism to locate patterns and changes.²⁰³ A graphic organizer such as a sociogram²⁰⁴ might be used to analyze patters in the data in a search for "answers" to the inquiry question. An exercising in reframing to imagine another's eyes or another audience²⁰⁵ can lend distance and perspective to the data analysis. Narrative exercises and journaling may help a teacher inquirer come to new understandings of the experience of the classroom.²⁰⁶ Other inquirers, such as my colleagues in the Professional Development program and Field Programs where I worked for eleven years, as well as my students, have made many valuable suggestions for approaching data analysis. I have used art-making, performance, role play and now I am using literary analysis and the writing of my dissertation to suggest an additional tool to the analysis of self narrative within teacher inquiry: literary analysis.

With analysis undertaken the laboratory scientist returns to the initial hypothesis and seeks to know if that initial question has been answered positively or negatively, or needs revision. Again, the teacher inquirer's job at this point is not always quite so

²⁰² See footnote 7.

²⁰³ Nancy Fichtman Dana, and Diane Yendol-Hoppey. *The Reflective Educator's Guide to Classroom Research: Learning to Teach and Teaching to Learn Through Practitioner Inquiry*. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, 2003) pp 125-127.

²⁰⁴ Ruth Shagoury Hubbard and Brenda Miller Power, *Art of Classroom Inquiry: A Handbook for Teacher Researchers: Revised Edition*. (Portsmouth: Heinmann, 2003.); p. 23

²⁰⁵ John Loughran, "Understanding Self-study of Teacher Education Practices," *Improving Teacher Education Practices Through Self-study*. Eds. John Laughlin and Tom Russell. (New York: Routledge / Falmer, 2002) p. 243.

²⁰⁶ Hobson, David. "Action and Reflection: Narrative and Journaling in Teacher Research," I. Eds. G. Burnaford, J. Fischer, & D. Hobson. (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2001)

straightforward. It may be, and very often is, that a positive answer located in the data is the invitation to further questions. That is true of a negative answer or even one that suggests the need for revision. The heart of teacher inquiry is its ongoing reflexive, cyclical, and self-generating nature.

But there are some aspects of teacher inquiry that are not, or at not easily, paralleled in laboratory science methods, the two inquiries mentioned earlier in this chapter: Performative Inquiry and Narrative Inquiry. The examination of my own hair narrative as a pedagogic tool exists in overlapping interstices of performative inquiry, narrative inquiry, and teacher inquiry.

It is difficult to argue that a teacher is not "performing" in a classroom, accepting a role and delivering lines. Performative inquiry as it intersects with teacher inquiry, however, demonstrates how much more is happening in the teacher's world.

Performative inquiry invites innovative and non-linear investigations, playing upon the multiple realities and interpretations of co-evolving worlds realized and recognized through creative action and interaction between researcher/teacher and participants/students within individual and shared, existing and imagined environments through motivating (im)pulse(s) of inquiry. Performative inquiry is elusively and momentarily balanced on the "edge of chaos" within the interstices of enactivism, complexity, interpretation, and performance.²⁰⁷

I would speculate that few experimental researchers would seek a balance point "on the edge of chaos" (although there may be a number who work in chaos theory applications to real world situations) but such times are rich for interstandings in teacher inquiry. Performative inquiry can uncover tensions and connections as opportunities for understanding practice, attending to stop moments, elusive, ephemeral, temporal that

²⁰⁷ L. Fels. *in the wind*. p. ii.

tug on our sleeve, calling us to attention.²⁰⁸ These emergent moments invite reflection, and in so doing, illuminate new possible learning.

My own teacher inquiry as reflected by "The Hair Story," contained many aspects of performative inquiry that I did not realize at the time, and not even after years of reflection. Performative inquirers interact with performance and with others as I had with my students. "Performative researchers must trust in the imagination, empathy, shared journeying"²⁰⁹ of the inquiry.

Narrative inquiry also interacts with teacher inquiry in a way noticeably different, though not at odds with, experimental scientific research. Within narrative inquiry we see the utility of the teacher inquirer as a fundamentally story-based being. Teachers make sense of their lives, and the happenings in the classroom through the story they see those experiences writing for them.²¹⁰ The large number of "roles" a teacher plays in his or her inquiry can be seen as multiple threads of narrative that may only be teased apart through the varied techniques that inform narrative inquiry. Storying and re-storying experiences are the way that the teacher inquiry and the overlap with narrative inquiry can think about experiences.²¹¹

Narrative inquiry also contributes rigour and reliability to the teacher inquirer's work.

we recognize the narrative as in attunement to our own lived experiences and those of others ... the narrative opens spaces of possibilities, that speak to the complexity of teacher narratives, foreign and familiar to our own lived experience.

²⁰⁸ Lynn Fels, "Collecting Data Through Performative Inquiry: A Tug on the Sleeve." *Youth Theatre Journal*, 2012, 26 (1). Pp. 50 – 60.

²⁰⁹ L. Fels. *in the wind*. p. 83.

²¹⁰ See footnote 149.

²¹¹ See footnote 152.

²¹²Like performative inquiry, narrative inquiry helps bring attention to the rubs and discontinuities of a teacher's practice as well as to the practice's successes and joys. Just as readers may seek coherence and continuity in a story and may be wary of coincidence and infidelity to real world events, so teacher inquirers engaged in narrative inquiry seek to be reliable and trustworthy for themselves in the writing of their teacher narrative. Narrative inquiry and performative inquiry both make room for "aesthetic emotion" that arises through modern aesthetics²¹³ and help teacher inquiry students to deal with the sometimes contradictory understandings of "objectivity" and "subjectivity" in research. The teacher's emotional reactions become legitimate tools of analysis.

Both performative and narrative have central roles in teacher inquiry. In teacher inquiry "we perform our responses or answers and through narrative crystallize and theorize them."²¹⁴ Lynn Fels would add that

in teacher inquiry we perform our not knowing, our questions and wondering, our doubts, embodied ambiguity that keeps us off-balance, unsettled, seeking resolution, and facing the gaps of the not yet known, and the never to be known in in-between spaces of what is invisible.²¹⁵

²¹² Lynn Fels, in conversation, 2014.

²¹³ Jeanne Deslandes, "A Philosophy of emoting," *Journal of Narrative Theory* 34.3 (2004) 335.

²¹⁴ Vicki Kelly, in conversation, 2014.

²¹⁵ Lynn Fels, in conversation, 2014.

Teacher VI

They've come though,
And hammered their theses to the door,
(how close to faeces that word hangs in my mind
messily dripping there, making my workspace
stink.)

Taken some of my tools,
bent others

The hand on the shoulder....stolen!

A "what happened next?"
To the crying child..
given away

The want to brush
the hair wetted to her face,
perform a Dad's hug,
away.

Some small rebellions:
Little Meagan gets a hug at Grad.

I've known her since she was twelve.
Now, the make-up runs.
And elbow length black evening gloves
dab at eye corners,
And when you are seventeen,
when your best friend is not talking to you
when it is this event,
what else will do?

But the critics are merciless.

Marlowe Irvine

Chapter 5. A Literary Analysis of the Script

Situating and Swimming

I want to sit uncomfortably among no one;
to be alone, voyeur, eavesdropper
and take from what I spy and hear what
I want from me.

Marlowe Irvine

In exploring my own narrative I " ... need to find a way of standing back which keeps us in touch with the work's tangible presence."²¹⁶ My method of inquiry for this investigation is the application of literary analysis techniques to my own narrative: a literary analysis as inquiry by which I can examine and interact with "The Hair Narrative" which will in turn enlarge my understanding of my identity of "myself" and as a teacher and researcher. I have newly donned a methodological skin in its infancy and this skin seems exceedingly thin, papery, translucent, and can only cover, not really hide, the skin I strode the world in before I began and now I explore. The large understandings, interstandings, biases, beliefs, hopes and fears I feel, as my fingertips smooth this skin over and over, will not be masked, so they must be shown. Others will see through this skin, still others will think they do, and I suspect that I, for all my care, will tear this covering as I move. But while I had no thoughts as I began to wear this skin of wearing it

²¹⁶ Terry Eagleton, *How to Read Literature*, p. 49.

forever, I now can be sure that large patches of covering have adhered and will be always, now, a part of me.

And this way of inquiry calls forth in me the desire to look again at my narrative as I have looked at the words of so many others; as convoluted workings and imaginings; revealed in discourse; and in examination of the artefact of the words and the doodled faces that I have placed as strategic dives on a narrative field of exposure, intimacy and vulnerability. To gain something like the distance I have from the works of other literary writers as well as to come closer to the meanings with which my narrative may originally have intended, I adopt a close reading. I must not forget that "the original meaning, assuming that we have access to it, [cannot] always pull rank over what the piece may come to signify later."²¹⁷

As an exercise, join with me in imagining this work to be one of a stranger-author; someone we have never met. Let us refer to the author in the third person and examine his work as though he were not physically present to be one of the narrative's co-creators with us. Imagine him dead or otherwise distant, remote and restless in a different temporality. What is he not saying and through what he says what is he telling us about the work and his ideas about it. And let's "third person" him, too, in a mental sense just to embrace that illusion a little more firmly.

My reasons for this tortured and ludic attempt at separation arise from ideas I entertain about the nature of "truth." Very particularly, truth within narratology. I just do not think the truth of the narrative is in the narrative at all, rather the truth, such as it is, is in the lived experience and the discourse we have with the narrative as we engage with it. I don't have to wonder "did this actually happen?" I have to wonder "what truths may I come into as I examine and analyse what has been put to paper?"

The author as narrator, creator of an art-piece, as inquirer into self and artist-of-"self", as teller, as recorder and archivist is not a producer of works of "truth" but a producer of experiential works in dialogue with perceived truths born of a multitude of

²¹⁷ Terry Eagleton, *How to read Literature*, p.142.

experiences and interactions. Again, seen through my lens of post-modern thought, conventional notions of truth and falsity might seem incredulous but I think the dichotomy is worth exploration when one speaks of the conventional ideas of, the aesthetic experience, and the “truth” of art. Monroe Beardsley defined the aesthetic experience as consisting of: object directedness, felt freedom, detached affect, active discovery, and wholeness.²¹⁸ While these help to eliminate from the arena of consideration those aspects of my narrative of my own appearance peripheral to it as an art form, they are bound in a different conception of art than a post-modern awareness can help us to see. That is, I do not actually have to look as I have described myself but attend to the descriptions created to join in discourse with aspects of the situation of those descriptions.

And what of the truth of my narrative and the truth of my own analysis of what it means and says? In his chapter, “Helen’s Beethoven: Truth and Morality” in *Aesthetics*,²¹⁹ Colin Lyas argues that the beliefs of a person evaluating art, particularly narrative fiction, are a relevant and important part of their aesthetic valuing of the text. He follows Beardsley in distinguishing first between report statements, which occur within a work, and reflection statements, made by a work. Report statements such as “Shylock is a Jew” made by Shakespeare in *The Merchant of Venice* are not at issue here, since they are a part of the fictional element of literature, the fantasy and lies which compose literature. Since Shylock never existed we cannot evaluate the truthfulness of this report statement. It must be assumed to be true within the context of the work just as it must be assumed that characters, settings, plot, and dialogue are “accurately” reported. But when I say, “I had hair” I speak both as the creator and interpreter of something that, while it impacts my examination of the narrative, is no more true or false than “Shylock was a Jew.”

Lyas makes a significant point about plausibility that is relevant to my telling of “The Hair Narrative”. He argues that the ability of the reader to see the events of a work as plausible can affect his aesthetic appreciation of the work. If a report statement in a

²¹⁸ M. Beardsley, “Aesthetic Experience,” p. 73.

²¹⁹ C. Lyas, *Aesthetics*, (Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1997)

work violates some belief held by a reader, they may have difficulty in entering “imaginatively into the world of the work.”²²⁰ Someone unable to accept the ministrations I lavished on my own hair does not experience my narrative as fully as I intend it to be experienced, but do I? Am I able to separate my perceptions of my own memories from my willingness and unwillingness to make factual statements or what I perceive to be factual statements?

What we might call reflection statements are Aristotle’s primary reason for seeing the value in literature.²²¹ It is the pity and pain we feel for Oedipus that burns off our excess emotions and leaves us supposedly better people. The narrative is how I feel about my own predicament in the creation of self that I wish to examine as I search for the significance of my hair narrative within my understanding of my identity. And whether this narrative is true in any referential sense of truth or not, I propose, is not an issue. The claim is not subject to verification through records of real world events; the claim is a statement by a character, who does not even exist, except within the pseudo-artificial realm of this narrative. And if I can create my own catharsis, then through reading and analyzing it, create a new one, I (and perhaps you) may indeed become a “better” person than the author whose work (my own work) I read.

In “The Problem of Belief,”²²² Arnold Isenberg examines the relationship of truth to the analysis of poetry, but his argument is applicable to my difficulty in attempting to ignore a need for truths within my narrative and my examination of it. Like Lyas, Isenberg is not concerned with fantasy, nor the correspondence of literature to the real world, but rather its correspondence to the truth of the nature of the human condition. I would suggest that a narrative such as the one I have created, then examine here, rather than corresponding to any truth about the human condition, enters into a discourse with notions of identity about my own condition, and if successful, as a text which we experience but do not see as not necessarily grounded in the physical world.

²²⁰ C. Lyas, p. 193.

²²¹ Aristotle, *Poetics*, trans. Malcolm Heath. (London: Penguin Books, 1996) particularly section 10.5 “Astonishment and Irrationalities.”

²²² A. Isenberg, “The Problem of Belief,” *Collected Papers on Aesthetics*. ed. Cyril Barrett. (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1966)

The central feature of Isenberg's argument is an idea that literary works, rather than reflecting the substantive world, create a world through their own constructions, and if they are of value, in turn, motivate us to turn a reflective eye on our own narrated worlds.

A writer using bits and pieces of the "experienced world" of the human condition is no different from a painter using colours, which may occur in the world of lived experience, but who does not necessarily apply them in an exact replica of what is seen or remembered. This understanding removes from the work the obligation to correspond to the perceived reality of each of its readers and removes from the evaluation of the work any necessity to contain a truth external to it. Thus *Great Expectations*, although it could be said to be set in Victorian England, is actually set in a Dickensian Victorian England and through it, Dickens pursues the "greater truths" of the nature of humanity that he used as a part of his art. And of course Dickens was, in his stories, a liar. There never was a Pip; he never was orphaned; he never betrayed anyone. The same may be thought to be said of "The Hair Narrative." The narrator-who-will-become-teacher creates the world in which he grows up. While the external world seems occasionally reflected in statements the narrator makes, the correspondence of those statements to the author's reality of Canada from the 1960s to 1990s is not a reason for criticism of the story-teller's art.

And, not being as skilled a story teller as Shakespeare or Dickens who might create a narrative of a young man and his hair that would interact with the great truths of the human condition, I instead turn to examining, analysing and drawing ideas from my narrative because that is something I was trained to do in university, do frequently with the works of others, and do truly enjoy, I also do it to bring it to the attention of the world as worthy of attention and application, as a pedagogic tool. I was trained not to care that there was or was not a Pip, but to care how Pip and Joe and Miss Havisham and Magwich are made to be. A literary analysis is what I am after because it suggests its own ideas about life, which may or may not be the intended ideas of the author. I have had the experience of literary analysis of my work pushing my understandings; an experience shared previously in Chapter Two when I shared how literary analysis of my poem was performed pedagogically in my classroom.

My evaluation of my own work, then, must consider the narrative within the context it creates. “[W]e judge them in the framework of beliefs and values provided...and not by our own serious convictions.”²²³ “For that a feigned example hath as much force to teach as a true example.”²²⁴

Isenberg sees that just as we must separate understanding from an evaluation of truth (one must first understand an assertion before one can evaluate its truth or falsity) we can, and should, separate the perception of the aesthetic from the evaluation of its truth or falsity. We read *Great Expectations* first as an experience, then may attempt to situate ourselves at a distance from the work to engage in a discourse with it and consider its other implications. This is Kant’s “disinterested interest” and it transports the evaluation of the truth of events described into contextual truths. That is, if the reader has to wonder if a work of art reflects any part of objective reality, is she really “disinterested”?

The aesthetic experience is imaginative not in the sense that all its objects are fictitious, but in the sense that it treats them indifferently, whether they are fictitious or real; its attitude...neither asserts reality, truly or falsely, nor denies it, but merely imagines.²²⁵

I believe that it is in the act of imagination that the experiences teach both myself and my students.

And how is it possible for me to even approach a state of disinterestedness from my own narrative as I write, perform, and examine it? If I include a detail or turn of phrase with the hope of creating a smile on my reader’s face, but must also twist the detail in a way that turns from the veracity of my narrative, am I being an artist, a charlatan, a theorizer, or cleverly post-modern? Like curriculum theorist, William Pinar²²⁶

²²³ A. Isenberg, p. 139.

²²⁴ Sir Phillip Sydney, *An Apology for Poetry or The Defense of Poesy* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1965) p. 110.

²²⁵ R. G. Collingwood quoted in A. Isenberg “The Problem of Belief,” p. 131n.

²²⁶ William Pinar, *Autobiography, Politics, and Sexuality: Essays in Curriculum Theory. 1972-1992.* (New York: P. Lang, 1994)

who sought to analyze his own experiences via free association and subsequent reflection, I create so many layers and facets of understanding that a serious attempt to choose one or the other warp weaves the fabric of my own understanding and interstanding of something closer to a whole.

If I attempt to distance myself from my own narrative via literary analysis, this very artificial idea of distance becomes nuanced with a new set of possibilities. These possibilities, I would suggest, are the engagements that put a lie to the idea that the storyteller is a "liar." The truth of the story, in its correspondence to some fictional non-situated, clinically objective reality, is not at issue, what is at issue is how the narrative is created, how it works in discourse with its audience, how it is crafted, not if it is "true." And then I consider what I may learn in creating, examining and watching the interplay of literary techniques with the work that takes us inside my story and makes it an examinable artefact, a sort of truth.

As much as performing a close reading on something that I wrote might seem contrived and artificial, the process has value when it draws my attention to the "how" of what I have written. And more importantly, the learning evoked. The extra attention close reading of language allows me is the entry point into a new discourse with my own work. By approaching this particular piece of literature as closely as possible to the way in which I would approach literature by an absent stranger, I may be able to turn an awareness to the techniques of literary writing into insights about my own narrative inquiry, and timorously broach the question, "Who am I?" How will literary analysis of the narrative help me with interstanding my own "self" or identity as a multiplicity of selves.

So I will use the same technique that I pioneered for myself at the beginning of my career as an "English major" and later taught to adolescent and adult students in Language Arts and literature classes. I create a copy of the literature, which I can interact with, take notes on, and come back to repeatedly. The advent of photocopying allowed me to refine this technique slightly by allowing me, rather than writing directly in a published book, to make a reduced size "text" leaving the space around the other author's writing for notes and giving me the ability to revisit, by recopying, without interference from previously recorded ideas. When teaching the techniques of close

reading to students, I also introduced the idea of colour allowing threads to be "coded," but this is not a technique that I have found comfortable and did not use with my hair narrative. Arendt argues that without taking into account the real possibility of a new beginning and seeing oneself as a beginner, "the chances that tomorrow will be like yesterday are always overwhelming"²²⁷

Close Reading, Part One

Learning how to be a literary critic is, among other things, a matter of learning how to deploy certain techniques. Like a lot of techniques — scuba-diving, for example, or playing the trombone — these are more easily picked up in practice than in theory. All of them involve a close attention to language than one would usually lavish on a recipe or a laundry list....²²⁸

²²⁷ Hannah Arendt quoted in N. Levinson, "The Paradox of Natality: Teaching in the Midst of Belatedness." *Hannah Arendt and Education: Renewing our Common World*. ed. M. Gordon. (Oxford: Westview Press, 2001) p.14.

²²⁸ Terry Eagleton, *How to Read Literature*. p. 7.

When I had spent some time with "The Hair Narrative", page one looks like this:

Openings: Explains

Chapter 2. The Hair Narrative

The Hair Story
(a fiction, despite all the reality described within)

what does this set up?

The Other Artists

I was born, very young. And I had hair. I have evidence to support me in these beliefs: photographs; the testimony of parents and relatives; logic, at least in the idea of having been born young; a parallel of my own two children's beginnings from which I extrapolate back to my own.

science? court? logic does not apply to hair or feelings about it

fiction and reality are not opposites (I should know this)

language of the courts

hardish moment due to a... puncturing what?

this is the whole paper/an outcome (could read) an extrapolation

the language and discourse of courts: need to know the law what will

While I have reasons to think my extreme youth and hair were as experientially tangible for me at that period in my life as the age and hair I live with now, I have no feeling for them or their presence in me. No current, past or residual remnants of the way I felt, can be found as hard as I may search. The youngness has drifted away, and is difficult to find even whispers of it most of the time; the hair has remained, most of it; though not the same hair I was born with, wrestled with as an adolescent, banished to the hairdresser's floor as a twenty-something; shaved off as a young adult, dyed, or bleached, or tinted or tied-back as I played through adult life, but all the same, my hair.

not sure how

does a being experience youth? (what we know) is called young

a teacher uses the experience of children to reflect on own experience & learning

why?

hard sounds haunting away at the problem

how hard did we experience youth? how we have been witnessing

All other pages were similarly marked. Then, armed with long experience born of years in the classroom engaging in literary analysis and the *Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*,²²⁹ I began to transfer the ideas brought to my attention through my interaction with the text into the analysis that follows. Not every minute aspect of the analysis will be shared here. Instead I will demonstrate in the examination of the first two hundred and fifteen lines the detailed close reading that this technique allows. For the remaining sections of "The Hair Narrative" I will concentrate on reporting the insights close reading awarded in what I came to see as key moments of the story: shifts in attitude, realizations about self and other, revelations about character, the kind of victory achieved, as revealed in my analysis. In the next and final chapter I will briefly sum up the insights gained in the critical literary analysis of my own narrative made possible through the close reading.

The Opening: (lines 1 — 61)

The hair story opens with a statement that it is a "fiction, despite all the reality." Interestingly, this is precisely the form of error that Terry Eagleton cautions against; he proffers close reading as a technique which seeks to help the literature student avoid seeing literature, fictional or otherwise, as too real.²³⁰ For example, while those who read literature are aware, normally, that what they are reading is a fiction or at least fictionalized, discussions of literature often speak, particularly about characters, as though they were persons. This is, Eagleton feels, the result both of post-structuralist approaches to literature and literary theory as well as the movement away from close reading.

The problem of separating a "reality" described on the page from a composed world where the principal character is based, in an autobiographical sense on the author, makes the pitfalls of biographical fallacy²³¹ even more difficult to notice and to come to

²²⁹ Chris Baldick, *Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014) electronic version for e-reader.

²³⁰ Terry Eagleton, *How to Read Literature*. p. 6.

²³¹ A belief, normally considered an error in the analysis literature, that events described were inspired or influenced by actual events of history.

grips with. The authorial voice may actually come from the mouth of another fictional character created by the author.²³²

We are reminded of the possibility that there is more than one person at work here, by the subtitle for the first section: "The Other Artists." In one sense this is probably a reference to others who interact with the narrator's hair, a mother and much later teachers and friends. It also may be a reference to the photographer and the narrator as an other artist of the daughter's hair. It may even contain within it a straightforward reference to Margaret Atwood as another artist in the section to follow, but it seems, given the author's awareness throughout of co-authoring with any reader who engages in discourse with the text while reading the work, that one of the other artists, at least, is the reader who engages with the language and the one who co-composes "The Hair Narrative".

The author begins with an attempt at humour "born very young."²³³ Why would he do so? The narrative as a whole, at least this first part, is not humorous in general tone so why begin with a joke? Perhaps it arises from an attempt to distance the narrator from the author—a form of self-protection deflecting attention into the humour and therefore away from the pain we are to see later in the narrator's unfolding story. It sets the stage for the author/narrator to become a very diabolical sort of liar; the prestidigitator who distracts here while slipping in a bit of pain to be discovered at the flourish? A kind of Kafka humour: opening novels of horrific happenstances for characters. "Someone must have made a false accusation against Josef K, for he was arrested one morning without having done anything wrong."²³⁴ But there is nothing funny about the arrest for Josef K who is eventually executed, still having done nothing wrong. It is said that Kafka laughed uncontrollably while reading the execution scene to friends.²³⁵ Perhaps that is where this

²³² It is often considered illegitimate in literary analysis to equate the author with the historical person who wrote the piece of literature. See Terry Eagleton, *How to Read Literature*, p. 41.

²³³ "Hair Narrative," line 1.

²³⁴ Franz Kafka, *The Trial*. Trans. Idris Parry. (London, Penguin Books, 1994.) p. 1.

²³⁵ Max Brod, *Franz Kafka: A Biography*. Trans. G. Humphreys. New York: Schocken Books, 1960) p. 178.

author's humour, when it happens, fits in. It may just be that some things are so serious all you can do is laugh at them. At least, then, his tears are also explained.

So as humour distracts, it also protects. "This is not serious" it reminds the audience. "This is a series of funny coincidences; no children were hurt in the telling of this story." But the central character has been hurt, and worse, hurt by himself for what might be seen as the most trivial of reasons to all who come to listen. So the author hides, pretending to pull the strings of the clown marionette while laughing, rather than seeking solace and shelter from hurt.

The author also, here and in many other places uses ordinate and subordinate clauses as separate sentences: "I was born young, very young. And I had hair."²³⁶ The sentence fragment, which begins a paragraph at line forty-three while grammatically "incorrect," seeks to create equalities outside of the meaning to the words. The author is engaged in a persuasion, which he seems to try to hide. Perhaps this is his invitation to a close reading.

Another noticeable aspect of the opening few lines is the language of court or scientific review: something or someone is on trial or is being asked to "prove" here. "I have/evidence,"²³⁷ "photographs,"²³⁸ "testimony,"²³⁹ "logic,"²⁴⁰ "extrapolate,"²⁴¹ "reasons,"²⁴² "experientially tangible,"²⁴³ "residual remnants,"²⁴⁴ "as hard as/I may search."²⁴⁵ Within this are a great many hard consonant and near consonant: "been born ...beginnings...extrapolate back."²⁴⁶ Forceful language sounds may be being used to make up for a less than rigorous case because, interestingly, the witnesses being called

²³⁶ "The Hair Narrative," line 2.

²³⁷ "The Hair Narrative," line 2-3.

²³⁸ "The Hair Narrative," line 3.

²³⁹ "The Hair Narrative," line 4.

²⁴⁰ "The Hair Narrative," line 4.

²⁴¹ "The Hair Narrative," line 6.

²⁴² "The Hair Narrative," line 8.

²⁴³ "The Hair Narrative," line 9.

²⁴⁴ "The Hair Narrative," line 12.

²⁴⁵ "The Hair Narrative," lines 12-13.

²⁴⁶ "The Hair Narrative," lines 5-6.

to testify are parents, relatives and, it might seem, the accused, at this stage too young to be trusted to know the difference between fantasy and reality and too removed by time to even "have .../feeling for them."²⁴⁷

Perhaps seeing the folly of this form of witnessing, the author moves from the certain sounding of hard consonants to the airing of Ws, Ss and SHs in lines that describe and follow the "youngness [that] has drifted away."²⁴⁸ The author enters a reminiscence with this softness before returning to harsher sounds when he returns yet again to accusatory language against his hair: "young adult dyed or bleached or tinted or tied-back as I / played through adult life."²⁴⁹ The back and forth of this testimony reminds the reader of the word "extrapolate" in line six. This entire narrative is a backward look and an extrapolation of feelings for many years in the past. The author is simultaneously the accused, a witness for the defense, and the judge and jury. If this is a trial, it may still be going on, as line ten suggests there is a continuity in experience between the baby and the present adult. Lines nineteen through forty-two continue to visit the ideas of distance from the experience, "disconnected" in line twenty-one; evidence related testimony again in line twenty-one "photos... foundation;" re-examination of the past in line twenty-seven "expand the extrapolation" and in line twenty-eight the need for conclusions which cannot be found.

Some other aspects of the author's style, which will return in many places in the narrative are also introduced in this opening section. The author's structural style is one of long sentences made up of short phrases. "As it is, I do not know if I, during my infancy, had thoughts about my hair, feelings about how it made me look,"²⁵⁰ is an example of this over-frequent use of commas and phrases in a sentence. This format gives the narrative a sort of tumbling flow as though ideas are being churned up as quickly as the thought, or partial thought, of the previous phrase is written. As a deliberate technique it speaks to an attempt at the appearance of spontaneity, but a

²⁴⁷ "The Hair Narrative," lines 10-11.

²⁴⁸ "The Hair Narrative," line 13.

²⁴⁹ "The Hair Narrative," line 18.

²⁵⁰ "The Hair Narrative," lines 19-20.

spontaneity of a clever mind; a mind which sees coincidences and makes connections incredibly rapidly.

Another technique in frequent use is the creation of a complex idea by using dashes rather than spaces among words: "self-as-artist-of-self,"²⁵¹ "as-very-young,"²⁵² and "contented-appearing."²⁵³ The author is also fond of the use of virgule²⁵⁴ to create lists that seem as though they are a single thing: "mind/body/heart/skin."²⁵⁵ This seems to further support the stylistic idea that this author wishes to appear clever to the reader. Rather than simple lists and explanatory connections the author joins through juxtaposition and punctuation as if to say "I know this; it is obvious to me." This idea is reinforced as the author corrects the "mistake" of the photographer in smoothing his daughter's curls (lines 33-35) but the assessment of a bad act is softened, teacher like, by soft consonants chosen in the description of the error. "The photographer at her first professional shoot smoothed it/out of her eyes."²⁵⁶

We see in lines thirty-one and thirty-two a clear example of what, in literary analysis is called the oral formulaic, the use of techniques that come from oral traditions. In these two lines it is the repetition of the phrase "how she feels." The reminders of the supposed oral origins of this piece come not just in repetition which may have helped the author in remembering but also in short sections to provide room to check for audience attention; restatements of previous ideas to help the audience follow the "plot;" and an episodic structure where anecdotes can be joined together improvisationally. This strategy, along with the normally casual vocabulary, not only bolsters the author's claims that this work began as a spoken piece but also helps to mitigate against some of the more outlandish turns of phrase and claims of superiority that may be seen in certain

²⁵¹ "The Hair Narrative," line 22.

²⁵² "The Hair Narrative," line 26.

²⁵³ "The Hair Narrative," line 53.

²⁵⁴ The forward slash, the virgule, is used in literary analysis to indicate the ends of lines in verse and so here seems to rejoin separate lines or separated thoughts.

²⁵⁵ "The Hair Narrative," line 26.

²⁵⁶ "The Hair Narrative," lines 33-34.

places. So a pronouncement like "May her hair always feel like magic to her," can be degrandized by the throw away aside: "trimmed, or not."²⁵⁷

The author begins to insert marginalia at line 48. All of these drawings at the margins are very simple line drawings; this first suggesting something like the baby with a single long curl described in the narrative. Are these illustrations meant as an "enhancement" to the prose? Or are they a replacement for prose using a different textual form? More of these come later but not at a consistent "rate" and no direct discussion as to their purpose appears in the story itself. They will be subject to more discussion at the end of this close reading in the examination of the cluster of drawings that appear on the last page of the story.

Lines fifty-two to fifty-six touch briefly on surfing references "a tunnel of curl,"²⁵⁸ "riding high."²⁵⁹ The surfer may be seen as a kind of victor, however briefly, of a natural force. The author draws attention to exhilaration in the face of demise by tying "happily" and "hung" with initial Hs.²⁶⁰ Both the imagery and soundscape of the last pieces of this opening will contrast strongly with the chill of the Margaret Atwood poem that the author will use to shift mood after line sixty-one. But first the author will throw²⁶¹ one more paradox at his reader. Photographs of the speaker are of a "missing person."

However, this story teller has already informed us that he is not to be relied on for veracity. Unreliable narrators are not an unusual trope in literature (nor research texts). The "Geoffrey," the narrator of the *Canterbury Tales*,²⁶² is famously naive, misinterpreting the intentions of the pilgrims he describes so accurately, but the pilgrim retelling the pilgrimage does not lie; he is unaware. This author, however, steeps the narrative in denials of the veracity or at least accuracy of the storyteller. "The narrative is

²⁵⁷ "The Hair Narrative," lines 41-42.

²⁵⁸ "The Hair Narrative," line 52.

²⁵⁹ "The Hair Narrative," line 56.

²⁶⁰ "The Hair Narrative," line 57.

²⁶¹ "The Hair Narrative," line 61.

²⁶² Geoffrey Chaucer, especially "The General Prologue" *The Canterbury Tales* (New York: Knopf, 1993) pp 1-25.

a fiction, despite all of the reality described within,²⁶³ "I have no feeling for them or their presence in me,"²⁶⁴ "I do not know if,"²⁶⁵ "I do not know how I felt,"²⁶⁶ all act as though they are attempts to overcome the "author as liar" by admitting the fiction. There are six such denials in the first fifty lines. Are we supposed to believe this author more because he knows he is making things up? What are the effects of admitted naivety, disambiguation, or outright falsehood in a narrative? As with humour, it may be a form of protection for the author as an autobiographical writer. He seems to be saying: "There are lies going on I will admit to; see how honest I am?" But the effect of this type of honesty from a narrator also makes us question his statements of "honest falsehood." What else is he hiding when he admits to some statements being lies or speculation while other ideas are spoken of as truth? What notions, events, or memories are being left unuttered, unwritten, even though for the author they might form some part of the memory of the narrative.

The Narrative Hook: "This is a photograph of me" and lines 62 — 118.

The early inclusion of a verse piece by another author would seem an establishing artefact, refining the place from which the author will speak, giving him a backdrop in front of which to perform. The particular verse piece, "This is a photograph of me" by Margaret Atwood is a chilling and powerfully written tableau description of a portrait that contains no human figure.

The lie the reader has been asked to accept, that the speaker is "missing," creates a mystery that may be intended as a hook for the reader; a hook that introduces the sequence of events which will compose the bulk of the hair story. And in mystery writer fashion this author makes us wait for an explanation. He distracts us with a verse poem by another author included in a different type face but reminding us both of the "evidence" of photographs and the author's oral formulaic stance. The poem has the same formula.

²⁶³ "The Hair Narrative," subtitle.

²⁶⁴ "The Hair Narrative," line 9.

²⁶⁵ "The Hair Narrative," line 19.

²⁶⁶ "The Hair Narrative," line 24.

As a frame, the poem is effective in maintaining some of the protections afforded by the humour or the statements of “honest lies.” Here is a photograph of me, both Atwood and this author say, but at first glance this would seem a lie of sorts. There is no “me” evident in the photo’s description. “but if you look long enough/eventually/you will be able to see me.”²⁶⁷ “The Hair Narrative” with this inclusion, sets itself up to mirror the lake in the photo. The narrative is the surface of the lake in which the storyteller has been submerged and, he says, all you will see initially is “the effect of water/on light.”²⁶⁸ The “me” is there, however, and the author reminds us that the hermeneutic of the story contains the author as well as the reader. There is a vulnerability offered up here, but not one that will be easy to find or breach.

The speaker in “This is a photograph of me” is dead, as the author is about to claim that he himself was dead, or at least has been dead, but has recovered. Just as the closing statements about despair hint at a greater power to overcome, this bald statement of coming back from the dead claims for the author a tremendous power, unthinkable for mortals. It also serves to mitigate against the defeats and particularly the claimed feelings of defeat that figure so largely in this section of the narrative. If “one can’t keep a good man down,” then how does one defeat an immortal, unless, like Tantalus, Sisyphus, or Prometheus the fate of the narrator is to be one of endless torture. Although that, too, places him in august company.

“My own personal history is authentically meaningful when I accept responsibility for my own existence, seize my own future possibilities and live in enduring awareness of my own future death.”²⁶⁹

And for this writer a return to a previous state of “death.”

At this point having established his own absence the storyteller seems desperate to establish self. Between lines sixty-two and sixty-seven “me” and “my” occur six times. One is tempted to say that this is “overkill,” an entirely inappropriate phrase at this point,

²⁶⁷ Margaret Atwood, “This is a photograph of me.” lines 24-26.

²⁶⁸ Margaret Atwood, “This is a photograph of me.” lines 22-23.

²⁶⁹ Eagleton, *Literary Theory*. p. 65.

but perhaps it is a form of "overlife." The calling back from the dead has a long, though glaringly unsuccessful tradition in Western Literature. In many of those cases, such as Eurydice,²⁷⁰ John William Polidori's *The Vampyre*,²⁷¹ Dr. Frankenstein's creation composed of dead bodies, and the Zombies of current faddish popularity, the dead who return are a horror, no longer fit for the world. This particular returned body, however, seems quite the opposite. It is powerless, "more helpless, less able."²⁷² While the water allusions come to an end here "hair surged back"²⁷³ and "in the wash below."²⁷⁴

We may see the beginning of the next extended metaphor, that of the battleground, in the word "second" of line sixty-nine. A second is the person in a dual who seeks to resolve the dispute of honour, or failing that arranges the conditions of conflict. Certainly the primary in the duel between the self and the outside world appears to be moving into the hair itself which will be personified in the next paragraph and beyond. Awarded intention, mischievousness, and a defiant, even malicious nature the hair will challenge all authority. It "now defied" and "no longer obedient it sprang."²⁷⁵ The sarcastic reference to the storyteller "never to be mistaken for/J.F.K."²⁷⁶ a reference to a president known both for his hair and his defiance toward missiles placed in Cuba and organized crime. The narrator has situated this challenge to authority in the sixties. Perhaps a fitting timescape for hair as a symbolic challenge to authority.

Evidence, so frequently referred to up to this point, has abandoned the narrator. There are "few photos"²⁷⁷ and the narrator was potentially more difficult to identify as he was "never looking at the camera."²⁷⁸ What the storyteller's bold, blunt conclusion,

²⁷⁰ from Thomas Bullfinch, *The Age of Fable* (New York: Review of Reviews, 1913) Chapter 24. accessed online at <http://www.bartleby.com/181/241.html>. June 21, 2012.

²⁷¹ J. W. Polidori, *The Vampyre* (New York: Woodstock Books, 1991)

²⁷² "The Hair Narrative," line 68.

²⁷³ "The Hair Narrative," line 68.

²⁷⁴ "The Hair Narrative," line 70.

²⁷⁵ "The Hair Narrative," line 79.

²⁷⁶ "The Hair Narrative," line 80-81.

²⁷⁷ "The Hair Narrative," line 83.

²⁷⁸ "The Hair Narrative," line 84.

having reviewed the scant and minimally explained evidence is "This is me."²⁷⁹ A statement at once conclusive and unnecessary. Who else would be telling this story? But it is a "me" who the storyteller, having been identified as self, is distanced again in the following lines where a connection is first denied and then is "Not happy, I think."²⁸⁰ How is it possible for the narrator to be unaware of the emotion of self while gazing at a picture of himself?

The writer's use of sound techniques particularly parachesis,²⁸¹ both enhance the work's cohesiveness and remind us of the claimed oral origins of this work. There is frequent use of this technique in this and other areas of reminiscence. The singsong rhythm and close repetition of "t" and "h" in "Pretty and sweet in the days of teacher-touching / always a hand on my hair."²⁸² These close repetitions of sounds, like more formal forms of rhyme, create both rhythm and ties of meaning. The author would seem to be recreating the joyful sounds and songs of childhood. He then juxtaposes them with the disappointments imagined in those with hands who do the touching. The contrast as the chilling idea that the author, even as he uses the language of a child's understanding, is beginning to have a mountainous and adult-like self doubt.

The language and phrasing of connection — non-connection continues. The author writes at line ninety-one that this principal character cannot imagine a childhood desire to have hair look a particular way, this seems a non-surprising thought. Twelve lines later the same voice will speculate on the source of the major thematic constituent of the hair story, the conflict that will be resolved, "my/awareness of...everyone else's concern for my hair."²⁸³ But the storyteller appears to seem to have pity for these strangers with the "silly/idea"²⁸⁴ that they might have an effect on the hair they minister, with the soft sounds in Fs and Ls in lines ninety-nine to one hundred and three. This makes the accusatory nature of the charge that the life-long struggle with insecurity

²⁷⁹ "The Hair Narrative," line 87.

²⁸⁰ "The Hair Narrative," line 88.

²⁸¹ Parachesis is the repetition of similar sounds in several words and in close succession. It is a more generic term than alliteration, consonance, or assonance.

²⁸² "The Hair Narrative," lines 104-105.

²⁸³ "The Hair Narrative," lines 102-104.

²⁸⁴ "The Hair Narrative," lines 99-100.

comes from the actions of these strangers all the more impactful. The author will return to this idea of the impact of the attitudes of strangers on his own insecurity in lines one hundred and fifteen to one hundred and eighteen. It seems even the innocent are not to be forgiven. An unwillingness to offer forgiveness reflects the narrator's harsh judgement of a self-condemned from an innocent childhood to a long sentence of incarceration within a poorly understood self-image.

Close Reading continued: The Artist and his Medium, lines 119 — 215.

In this section of "The Hair Narrative" the author introduces the metaphor of battle. "I lost the battle every single day. I never saw the scope of the war."²⁸⁵ There are literary antecedents for this type of hyperbole. For example, Alexander Pope in, "The Rape of the Lock"²⁸⁶ uses a battle metaphor to describe a social incident in which an unwelcome suitor steals a lock of hair by stealth and without permission from a young woman. Pope uses the battle metaphor to ridicule all parties for their reaction, an overreaction, to this invasion of personal space. The author here does not seem to be using the battle metaphor as a source of ridicule, though we may still see it as ridiculous, rather he seems to be using this hyperbole to exaggerate the feelings of defeat spurred by something as apparently minor as hairstyle. By extending that metaphor from battle to war the author extends both the timeline and the severity of the outcome.

But this is not where the section has begun. After the seemingly innocuous subtitle "the artist and his medium" the narrator seems to have come to some sort of decision. The previous section had ended with a slightly more sophisticated vocabulary "layered / their ministrations with criticism,"²⁸⁷ that seems more a memorized phrase, one which would not allow improvisation in the spoken form. The language of lines one hundred and twenty to one hundred and twenty-two return to the simple and casual, so casual in fact there are the deliberately vague references to "Gaye" and "Kildonan."

²⁸⁵ "The Hair Narrative," lines 207-208.

²⁸⁶ Alexander Pope, "The Rape of the Lock" *The Norton Anthology of English Literature: Third Edition* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1974) pp. 2154-2173.

²⁸⁷ "The Hair Narrative," lines 118-119.

Another reference best moves close to the obscuring meaning is "flat-topper" in line one hundred thirty-four. The "So" that begins the section is also casual and indicates a resolve to take action. The author may seem to be setting us up to believe some progress has been made but the still casual language of the next few sentences remind us with craggy consonant sounds that the experience described is every bit as uncomfortable as what is being related. "Snarls" are for "snipping;" and Ms. Sampson, who's name must remind us of another set of locks that were trimmed,²⁸⁸ is not to approve.

In addition to the battle metaphor, which will rage for significant portions of the narrative's other recurring theme, that began with references to John F. Kennedy and is revived and for a time takes center stage: is the idea of fashion. At line one hundred and twenty-eight the narrator subtly reminds us that what he pursued when he took the initiative to act and go to the barber was not actually what he would have pursued had he been more aware of fashion. While both Elvis and the Beatles might have been considered historical references to socially revolutionary characters these references are to memory and not to history. If the narrator had historical place for these performers he would not have been ignorant of the pathos of his request to see the barber. It is also in this paragraph at line one hundred and thirty-two that fashion takes on a kind of utility and becomes personal. The storyteller is hinting that fashion protects Robbie from the ministrations of Miss Sampson. This is also the first we've heard of the narrator looking for models: "I liked his look."²⁸⁹ Up to this point only his mother had a model but in the following sections of the narrative the pursuit to look like a model will be a driving force.

The description of the haircut moving from spiteful, accusatory, childish, teasing speech "perfect little spines of Robbie's head"²⁹⁰ is altered in a near repetition on line one hundred and thirty-eight to "perfect tiny spires." It is quite a distance to travel from quasi-jealous childhood to dedicated churchman and the author eases that transition

²⁸⁸ The use of Sampson, here, may or may not be a reference to the Biblical Samson.

²⁸⁹ "The Hair Narrative," line 132.

²⁹⁰ "The Hair Narrative," line 131.

with vocabulary like "buzzing thing,"²⁹¹ "concentric spindles,"²⁹² "Benedictine," and "tonsure."²⁹³ The worship of the "look" of contemporary fashionista Robbie, moves into the language of Catholic Church, a realm of deep commitment and an abiding deference to authority. So it is not a surprise that the comforting soft vowel and S sounds of the last few lines of this paragraph lead us to mistrust that the narrator will find any comfort with Miss Sampson, and of course he does not.

Line one hundred and forty-six ends a paragraph with a short declarative statement of the style that characterizes much of the narrative, particularly when the statement may be information intended to surprise or even shock the reader. From the opening "I was born very young,"²⁹⁴ "That is me"²⁹⁵ now "I began to avoid mirrors."²⁹⁶ This stylistic quirk becomes a place to focus on in the close reading. Simple short declarative sentences are not unusual flags that something significant is happening. We will see this again in line one hundred and sixty-four, "I was in awe" and in lines one hundred and seventy one to lines one hundred seventy three where six sentences are comprised of twenty-seven words. "I liked them. I liked the way my/clothes looked. I trusted that my looks showed me./I let my hair grow. This took forever."²⁹⁷ move the reader from the somewhat shocking, at least for this narrator, statement that he is pleased with at least some aspect of his appearance to another statement of difficulty or dislike in a short and therefore more noticeable space.

As the writer's relationship with his hair matures, although in this case it might be more accurate to say immatures, the personification of the hair and expansion of the detail of its character and personality continues. As his hair begins to grow, the author seems to have an awareness of fashion and that it would be "the envy of any in/San

²⁹¹ "The Hair Narrative," line 136.

²⁹² "The Hair Narrative," line 140.

²⁹³ "The Hair Narrative," line 142.

²⁹⁴ "The Hair Narrative," line 2.

²⁹⁵ "The Hair Narrative," line 87.

²⁹⁶ "The Hair Narrative," line 146.

²⁹⁷ "The Hair Narrative," lines 171-173.

Francisco during the summer of love."²⁹⁸ At the author's insistence that the hair take on a personality, the hair appears to achieve a persona and one with enough independence of thought to "betray."²⁹⁹ This paragraph ends with another subordinated thought for which we do not have an ordinate clause. It is a somewhat surprising and perhaps not completely workable bridge. The storyteller perhaps loses the metaphor momentarily and maybe that "selling out" is not quite strong enough to justify the punishment that the hair will soon receive.

The "hair submission routines" are couched in a language that seems drawn from both the shadow world of interrogation and the rich literature of "drowning poems." We see ideas and sounds of harsh treatment in "doused," "drown," "submerge," "powerless," "bound," a language and harsh rhythm of the victor. But the attempt by the author has long since undermined the readers' expectation that the speaker is to be victorious and the whole structure is undone by something like an attempt at humour "wave a little."³⁰⁰ And this phrase may also invite us to remember another female Canadian's drowning poem: "Not Waving But Drowning."³⁰¹ Stevie Smith was a somewhat older contemporary of Margaret Atwood who often, as in this poem, combined apparently innocent language with serious, even dark, subject matter. If this poem is the referent, "waving a little" may as a form of paronomasia³⁰² refer both to the hair's very

²⁹⁸ "The Hair Narrative," lines 176-177.

²⁹⁹ "The Hair Narrative," line 178.

³⁰⁰ "The Hair Narrative," line 188.

³⁰¹ Not Waving but Drowning
by Stevie Smith

Nobody heard him, the dead man,
But still he lay moaning:
I was much further out than you thought
And not waving but drowning.

Poor chap, he always loved larking
And now he's dead
It must have been too cold for him his heart gave way,
They said.

Oh, no no no, it was too cold always
(Still the dead one lay moaning)
I was much too far out all my life
And not waving but drowning.

³⁰² Paronomasia is a trope in which two distinct meanings of a word are implied as they are both applicable. Puns are a form of paronomasia.

slight curl as well as the speaker's demise or defeat at the hands of his hair as in the previous specific reference to "This is a photograph of me" and perhaps this narrator is also "too far out" from the boundaries of sensible relationship with his own appearance.

Before the narrator leaves the house in his all but subdued locks, he must wait for his hair to dry. Here the writer moves into a somewhat more rhythmic language. Writing first in iambic³⁰³ (pentameter) "I paced the house as it changed from drenched to damp" then in near anapest³⁰⁴ (pentameter) "I became deft at removing the three strips with a single finger as I left the house to arrive dampish" meters. The skilful use of sound rhythm to reflect anxious, rather than relaxed pacing, moves to the more fluid, more visually engaging image of a sweeping of the tape away as the narrator "leaves the stage" of the current scene.

And the personification of the hair reaches a new level. Just as the hair seems to attain a sort of immortality in recovering from near drowning, it also gains a sort of spiritual essence and supernatural power. It "began to rise from the waves renewed"³⁰⁵ perhaps an allusion to Aphrodite. And like Aphrodite the hair can wring itself out while recovering its virginity³⁰⁶ and thus return to its curly state of its own will. The only scars that the hair has retained were some "grooves" left by the tape. It seems little wonder that the battle metaphor returns here: "I lost the battle every single day. I never saw the / scope of the war."³⁰⁷

Following the thoughts of battle and war is a single paragraph to at once close off the section and introduce the next. It has a dying tone, a mood of quiet optimism and as is the writer's want, ends with a number of short phrases, this time not completely independent as they are separated by semicolons, but with the same mixture of surprise

³⁰³ Iambic meters have an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed one.

³⁰⁴ Anapest meters have two unstressed syllables followed by a stressed syllable. This example is not a perfect one but I have sympathy with the author as anapest is a less prosodic meter.

³⁰⁵ "The Hair Narrative," lines 199-200.

³⁰⁶ Aphrodite, at least according to the Tenth Book of Ovid's *Metamorphosis* could return to a virgin state at will.

³⁰⁷ "The Hair Narrative," lines 207-208.

and connotation of prophetic defeat. The author has insured, by this point, that "I met girls"³⁰⁸ is not an announcement of coming romance.

Close Reading continued: The Artist and his Brush, lines 216 — 297.

As could be predicted by the pattern of the narrative so far as well as by the concluding ideas in the preceding section, this part of the narrative starts off with intense imagery of death and aftermath. The narrator claims that his hair "circled [his] head like a vulture."³⁰⁹ This may be a reference to a typical pattern of male baldness, or even to the tonsure mentioned earlier. In either case it calls to mind an end and not a pleasant one. The hair, previously just anthropomorphised, then spiritualized, is now become an evil spirit in animal form. What worse for the narrator to imagine than that his now somewhat long standing enemy, his hair, is also awaiting his death. Or at least the death of his hair. It is a powerful image. The vulture turning a gyre in the sky. The shadow falling on the landscape below. When what the narrator needs is confidence, mentioned just three lines previously, how is confidence to happen? How is the traveler perishing of thirst in the desert to have hope force a revival when a large winged carrion eater passes overhead awaiting his certain demise. Here the author is depending on some cultural symbols to provide quick access to the minds of his reader. Those familiar with American Westerns are certain to know that vultures are always aware of imminent death. At the same time, the appearance of vultures also lead rescue parties to the doomed, sometimes even in time to save them. This foreshadows the discovery to be made in the opening parts of the next section "Part Two: Taming and Teasin'."

The vulture becomes, at least in his next appearance, a character of malice with intention and glee in the face of the fate of his victim to be. It "clucks" to itself and rubs wings together like the stereotype of the Victorian undertaker who circles the bed of the dying. A vulture is here clearly a symbol of the narrator's self condemnation. The corpse of the hair that is predicted seems already to be the corpse of the confident self, a self who didn't actually seem to exist.

³⁰⁸ "The Hair Narrative," line 215.

³⁰⁹ "The Hair Narrative," line 217.

The language and rhythms here are light and airy "It became the time of the shag haircut./The popular and fashionable boys and girls in/my grade nine classes all seemed to have/shags. I wanted a shag."³¹⁰ Even taking into account that the author may have known that "shagging" was a euphemism for activities that might have proceeded had he had the confidence he felt a certain haircut would give him, the euphemism is an amusing one, not particularly serious. This makes the line to follow including "final death rattle"³¹¹ emphasised by contrast.

As the vulture helps to construct an image of a dead or dying confident self the mother is reintroduced as a figure of redemption or at least hope for continued life "her sainthood...still in the balance."³¹² The mother character is doing all that she can but the harsh notes of this paragraph wonder at her likelihood of success. We will see, much later in the narrative, that this potential "saint" will, through a condemnation, a pronouncement feared since this vulture, finally allow the confident self its rebirth.³¹³ At this time, however, the mother is still judged harshly, not so much in the actions the author has her perform but in the language he uses to describe them. Hair is cut and "fell in / bits and tufts"³¹⁴ rather than being "caressed"³¹⁵ as strangers can do for others.

The mother continues to make beneficent efforts but the narrator identifies another as "ally." Again the references are obscure, objects of memory as much as history. We are given an explanation of the hair product, which does not work, Brylcreem, but not of the one that seems to, The Dry Look. And once again we see the constructed, multiple-word nouns, those that attempt to create more "aware" notions, which the author uses to impose thoughts on others. The Ron Enderland who is quoted regarding The Dry Look does not mention any kinship or even parallel with the

³¹⁰ "The Hair Narrative," line 220-223.

³¹¹ "The Hair Narrative," line 245.

³¹² "The Hair Narrative," lines 146-147.

³¹³ "The Hair Narrative," lines 1243-1244.

³¹⁴ "The Hair Narrative," line 251-252.

³¹⁵ "The Hair Narrative," line 251.

storyteller's experience but this narrator imposes it with "wispy-haired co-sufferers of hair-battle fatigue."³¹⁶

The author's bragging fashion regarding his attempt to approach a more fashionable state places further emphasis on the parts of self where the narrator does indeed seem to feel confident—his ability to outsmart audience, other, and hair. He places great emphasis on the maximal efforts he will extend to win the battle with the hair explaining in great detail the "drawing [of] uncrossable battle lines"³¹⁷ with the "refinable" method only he could have developed. His hubris will not go unnoticed by reader nor his hair and he will be routed when his hair no longer "bide[s] its time."³¹⁸ Again all the reader needs is the short declarative "It knew better"³¹⁹ to remind us that there is no victory for the speaker.

The writer uses rhythmic repetition of sounds to return us from the brave language of the battle line to the reality of this soldier's life:

My / mother's ministrations: snipping the water-wet hair shaping it / to match the magazine images; my patient drying, lacquer- / soaking, taping and redrying worked almost perfectly to / shape the outside me to suit the inside. The force of the curl / was unconquerable inexorable, however, and / with a little time the hair could put a wave / in my bangs, flip the wisps at my cheeks out / into space and turn thin tails into / corksscrews.³²⁰

He begins with a diminutive soundscape of "m" and "n," short vowels and "ing" participles. Later the author moves to the use of harder consonant sounds "k" and sneering "t" to conclude and lead to the lost battle of the next paragraph. Sandwiched between the two soundscapes is a statement odd enough to stand out even in this odd

³¹⁶ "The Hair Narrative," line 257.

³¹⁷ "The Hair Narrative," line 269.

³¹⁸ "The Hair Narrative," line 271.

³¹⁹ "The Hair Narrative," line 271.

³²⁰ "The Hair Narrative," lines 271-279.

narrative: "to shape the outside me to suit the inside."³²¹ In what sense can a hair style, particularly one so faddish, by the author's own statements, be representative of the "inside" of the author's self? Perhaps this comes from the story teller's sense of "being less." The shag has been described as for girls and boys, rather than men and women, with childlike bangs, wisps and lacking gender identity. Perhaps all of these things also describe the narrator, ephemeral, and lacking unique identity.

Without strength of his own, even lacking integrity, the storyteller moves to a place of defeat "I was defeated. I certainly felt it"³²² but breathes beside it the whisper of greater future power the movement for black equality. In one sense this is the familiar writer's tool of setting up the next act, the sequel. J. K. Rowling ends each *Harry Potter* book, save the last with a victory for Harry tinged with the certainty of future danger. But it is also a foreshadowing of the realizations that might come for the narrator. Of course, as with so many serialized protagonists, this one is unlikely to be victorious in the next scene/chapter, Part Two.

Noticing — Part Two: (Lines 298-528)

Part Two of "The Hair Narrative" is less personal, less whiny, and more observant than judgmental. The narrator has re-established the naiveté of childhood but not allowed it to be a condemnation, rather the narrative takes on the nature of a realization about self, particularly as the realization involves the juxtaposition of self with other. At line three hundred and four the narrator describes a desire to touch the black skin of an acquaintance. Rather than being an intention of invasion of the other it is, as

³²¹ "The Hair Narrative," lines 273-274.

³²² "The Hair Narrative," line 255.

in Maxine Tynes "Reach out and Touch"³²³ an innocently motivated desire to satisfy a curiosity made problematic by misunderstandings caused when "too polite" runs up against the unknown.

What can picking through this section of the narrative with the lens of literary analysis add to my understanding of this section of the tale? One thing that is noticeable in a closer reading of this section of the narrative is a greater attention to the historical events against which the narrative is set. While in the first section, events external to the narrator's life touch him through intermediaries (a mother imitating a president's hair style; a friend with a brush cut; an older brother embracing something within the "hippie" movement) the events of the larger world are more directly accessed and acted upon throughout this section. The narrator chooses to more clearly frame the hair story within social, political, and historical events of his life.

Why would the author make this move from an insulated to an aware world view? In some part he is acting as James Joyce does in *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and therefore this growing awareness of the world, must apply. But it also seems to function as an attempt to expand the power of the narrative, to take it closer to a statement about a more universal examination of the human condition. The author says

³²³ "Reach Out and Touch"
baby girl, baby boy behind me on the bus
reach out
and touch the curly electric of my hair
your fingers dipped in the
brown skin magic of my neck
to see if it comes off
your mama
slapping hands away
hush-up of your questions
and wondering out loud
why it doesn't come off.
I turn and smile for you
but you're already lost
in the silence and fear that motherlove wraps you in.
I should have sat beside you
snuggled my big warm self up close
held you while your mama juggled parcels.
then you would know it's o.k.

"I am like a black youth of the 70s;" "I was part of the disco and punk movements" I attended a 'real' war." "Listen to me," he seems to be trying to say, "I am part of the world, not a navel-gazing isolate."

This is a reminder to me as analyst and autobiographical writer that the lack of memory of historical events is not in itself an indication of the absence of influence of events outside my life and memory. As one trained in analytic knowledge the "argument from ignorance" is one of which I should have been wary. Absence of evidence is not evidence of absence and yet as "The Hair Narrative" was composed, my conscience effort was to situate the story in the remembered life of my childhood, but "the limited vision of child narrators means they cannot always make coherent sense of their experience."³²⁴ I seem to have intended the pretended ignorance of the outside world as a parallel to the supposed ignorance of the students I would teach. If nothing else this narrative is a coming of identity story for a teacher.

As author of the narrative I clearly cared that the reader begins to see himself or herself as involved to strengthen the power of the shared narrative in the reader's life. Invitations to imagine what I may have looked like,³²⁵ sharing of intimate verses on relationships such as the Jennifer series, and frequent references and allusions to other literature were all grounded in the idea of teaching my audience. As storyteller, I seemed to be moving toward trying to teach my reader something. Given that I knew at the time of the writing of "The Hair Performance," that the narrator was to become a teacher and teacher inquirer, here is an attempt to take a traditional stance of the teacher as the one who is aware, the one who brings the external world of events to the classroom and call it into question. The author is attempting to establish his *bona fides* as a sage. And to add to the irony "the sage on the stage" is precisely the type of teacher I tried to become.

³²⁴ Terry Eagleton *How to Read Literature* p. 86

³²⁵ "The Hair Narrative," lines 440-443.

In Part Two the antagonist, the speaker's hair, is less present but far more powerful. His hair has "attained a kind of mastery"³²⁶ and a few paragraphs later the list of "too"s in a rhythmic pounding of the chant of defeat. One reason why this might be an effective narrative device at this point is the movement of the antagonist from an external to an internal character. In contrast to an increased involvement of the external world in the narrative, the antagonist moves to an internal stance. This at once increases the "veracity" of the narrative for a historically aware audience while "protecting" the antagonist from the external world as the story burrows parasitically toward the centre of the narrator's being.

The narrator engages in another form of reversal with the school photograph and yearbook. Far from being warm reminders of the past these artefacts become sources of pain and shame, and remain so. This narrative is, here, a reminiscence that clearly sets itself outside reminiscences that are largely positive and comfortable. The tone here is not melancholic à la Proust's *A la Recherche du temps Perdu*, but angry and bitter; the long hurt of injustices past as yet unresolved means the narrator still avoids being photographed, indeed condemns the older daughter to a similar fate, in an intergenerational nod to the adage, the "sins of the father..."³²⁷

This long anger is mirrored in the references to the troubles of Northern Ireland. Still involved in eight hundred plus years of occupation in 1979, Ireland is visited by an occupied soul. And like the narrator, the Irish, it seems, do not forget. The Irish musical group the *Wolfe Tones*, their band name a reference to a rebel leader of the 18th century, compare the 1972 occupation of Northern Ireland to even older events in Irish history: "Cromwell's men are here again."³²⁸ Ancient grudges are still sources of anger and action in Ireland, and in the author.

³²⁶ "The Hair Narrative," line 348.

³²⁷ A reference to an idea contained within Judeo-Christian old testament in "Exodus," "Deuteronomy," and "Numbers" that a wrong caused by one generation will pass their consequences to the following generations.

³²⁸ From The Wolfe Tones "The Men Behind the Wire," *Let the People Sing* Dolphin Records, 1972.

More anger and more history surface in the descriptions of the punk world. "[T]hird or / fourth generation welfare recipients"³²⁹ slam-dance and bleed. The author contrasts the intensity of this musical and social movement claiming that the anger it represented in bloody knuckles and the internal smashing of teeth into cheeks was somehow more angry than a political and social movement that was leading to murders and bombings.³³⁰ Accepting this anger means, for the author, an acceptance of his own anger, not yet therapeutically as something to be addressed or embraced, but as a simmering, which will continue into the narrative and the author's life.

What these reversals and contrasts might seem to do for the author is give him, again, an attempt at some sort of claim of universality of experience. "No," he claims, "you may not have had hair like me but all of these others know my anger, my defeat, my hopelessness and my sense of the inescapability of one's own history." Like the punks, the narrator is "without hope, or any / reason to expect hope."³³¹

³²⁹ "The Hair Narrative," lines 488 - 489.

³³⁰ This is all I think I want to write about the silliness of my decision to travel to Northern Ireland during the spring and early summer of 1979. I learned that bullets really do whine or whistle when they pass and there is nothing you can do to make sure they only pass except to run home.

³³¹ "The Hair Narrative," lines 490-491.

Chapter 6. Taking from the Literary Analysis: Remains and Conclusions

Stepping Away and Taking from Close Reading

How does the literary analysis of my own narrative expand my interstandings of that narrative and of my own inquiry into self? How does it contribute to my pedagogic practices? How does it inform my artistic inquiry and teacher inquiry? In some ways what I am seeing is a wrestling with an idea of a lost innocence. An innocence lost first in death, and then in premature self doubt and feelings of non-acceptance. As author I create a somewhat sympathetic character in the child who has little control, believes that others understand differently than he does. My analysis leaves me with little sympathy for a whiny adult (even though it is me) and I think to myself, "You are an adult. It is time to stop re-examining the disappointments of childhood and suggesting that they are continuous and as devastating as war."

Noticing and Concluding — Parts Three and Four: (Lines 529 - end)

This long section of the narrative marks the beginning of a dawning acceptance (not to be fully realized until the very last section of the narrative) of the narrator's appearance by that narrator.

One early indication that the narrator is moving away from the harsh confrontational mood of the earlier sections is the shift from a metaphor of battle to a metaphor more akin to artist/gardener struggling with a medium. While it is true the medium now expands to include facial hair and more about clothing, the conflict is

scaled down; the “slings and arrows”³³² are traded in for scissors and “hair products.”³³³ This movement seems appropriate for a narrator moving into the caring profession of teacher where a battle-ready attitude might seem particularly inappropriate.

It is interesting to note, too, that just as the narrator had begun to refer increasingly to outside influences he now does so in increasingly positive ways. The external world, filtered through allies in part one, acknowledged but treated with trepidation in part two, becomes a source of strength and positive guidance in part three. The “Michael” character introduced at line seven hundred and ninety-two, the Mr. B. character introduced shortly after at line eight hundred and forty-seven, are more than allies, they are friends. They are not fellow combatants but supportive mentor-artists who teach the young apprentice in this aesthetic of appearance, lessons in a positive and empowering way. The contrast moves the narrative into a greater, more involved, and gentler relationship with his own appearance. “For the next few years [the narrator’s] hair and [he] existed in an oppressor-become-friend type of truce,”³³⁴ battle and metaphor returning briefly, is achieved through the machinations of these allies at line 990.

The theme of ally also reaches its apogee in this part of the narrative with the arrival of Jenifer introduced in line one thousand and seventy-nine. Certainly the most detailed character in the narrative (if one ignores, for the moment, the *de facto* character of the narrator) it is she who braids together the threads of the narrative into the narrator’s acceptance of the appearance with which he has struggled.

And this is not in a capitulation. The narrator continues to resurface the battle metaphor but now there are “parade[s] of victory”³³⁵ (for Jenifer, at least, if not for his hair) and he describes himself as a “casualty of battle, not as a combatant.”³³⁶ The tone of the narrative shifts to joyous exploration and exultation at lines 1168 through 1170. In another genre this coming together with Jenifer, the proud warrior and triumphant artist,

³³² “The Hair Narrative,” line 830.

³³³ “The Hair Narrative,” line 546.

³³⁴ “The Hair Narrative,” Lines 988-989.

³³⁵ “The Hair Narrative,” Lines 1122-1123.

³³⁶ “The Hair Narrative,” Line 1146.

would be the perfect spot for an ending: the final victory and the equivalent to the ride into the sunset. Of course that is not to be, and in preparation for sequel, the narrator brings his antagonist back with the closing line "and began to grow my hair."³³⁷

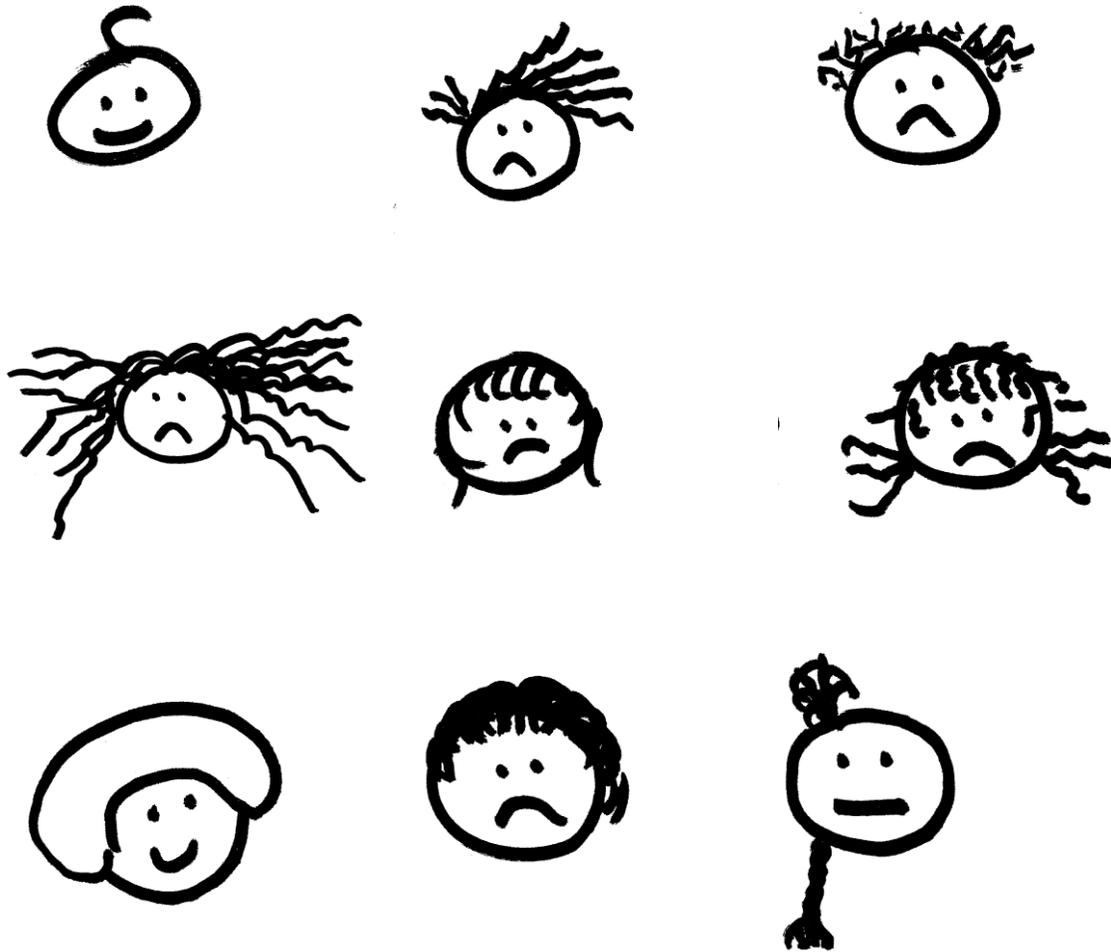
This analysis of Parts Three and Four of "The Hair Narrative" makes it clear that the author is steeped in the literary traditions of the Western canon and makes very little effort to move beyond them. There are companion-heroes, a forceful warrior goddess, reconciliations of belief and action, the plot is simple and unmarred by tangents; this is a coming to terms/coming of age/portrait of the artist as a young man. What does this literary reflection on my narrative tell me? Does it move me, again, into a realm of myself as narrator? Is all I have to offer as an author a rehashing of age-old literary traditions? That would be disappointing. How powerful a telling can "The Hair Narrative" be when everything it contains is a retelling of the narratives of the past, using the same archetypes and plot devices that have trained me to see into the words of an author?

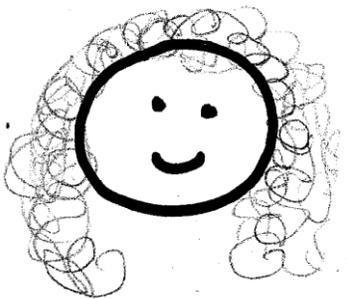
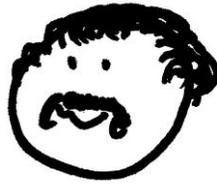
Then I reflect that as a coming-to-teacher tale, (indeed a coming-to-English-teacher tale) this realization is well placed. I was a teacher deeply married to the Western traditional modes and methods of teacher. It would take exposure, long after the parts of the narrative here, to move into a differently situated idea of what teachers are and do. What I needed was a good talking to, and I was not going to let anyone "in" enough to do so. I had to do it myself. And "doing it yourself," I would suggest, is exactly what one does in narrative inquiry. In my experiences with narrative inquiry, the telling and reflection opens the space for one's own realizations and recognitions. I say, "I hate my hair" and a response like "I wonder why you say that?" is the inquiry turned back to me. I think that had I found another who said, "I hate my hair, too" or "I hate your hair, too" it would not have opened the possibilities nor invitation for continued exploration of the teacher-self.

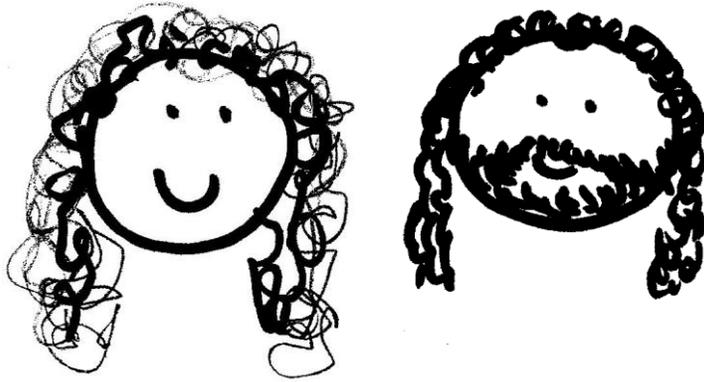
³³⁷ "The Hair Narrative," Lines 1218-1219.

Pictures Beside a Thousand Words

Finally what of the pictures of the narrator himself? This art of representation serves as both illustration of the text as well as parallel visual representation of the author's attitudes toward self image. They are an additional component of the language of the script, or perhaps even part of a different sort of discourse.







Literary analysis is not so easily turned to a close reading of pictures. For the most part the literature considered "worthy of study" in the Western Canon does not contain illustrations by the author.³³⁸ However, the pictures do "tell a story," particularly when situated within the longer narrative that contains them. They also have impact, a reader may also be stricken³³⁹ in seeing them. The story seems to reside in the mouths of the illustrated figure, which move, between two frames, separated by the straight mouthed punk, from misery to happiness. True the Afro wearing narrator has a smile, though we know how short lived it was from the textual narrative, the trend is clear: something happens in and around the space between punk time and the teacher coming to be that transforms the narrator's idea of self from disgruntled to satisfied.

This coming to terms with my appearance as I neared adulthood is the basis of a realization I made after a few performances of "The Hair Narrative" with high school students, not as a result of this literary analysis and is more germane to the Hair Story as a pedagogic story. The teaching moment was in the review of the detritus of the story on overhead or white board. "Where," I could ask my students, "did the shift in my attitude come, and why?" Discussions were very often excited and boisterous. Suggestions regarding entering adulthood, finding a partner, starting teaching all were

³³⁸ William Blake the most notable exception to this is, he seems to be studied as an author by some, a visual artist by others, and a historical figure by yet another group.

³³⁹ Lynn Fels, in conversation, 2014.

made, but in the end the conclusion was always that the story teller had come to accept himself.

Not a bad lesson for life.

In this close reading of my pedagogic story I create the reflection by holding my narrative up as a porous mirror through which, like an Alice through a looking glass or Sylvia Path, I step, thus enlarging the space to engage in theorizing by performing the narrative repeatedly, until finally, here committing it to digital form. In order to alter this "mirror's" reflective qualities, I polish the understanding of my narrative as I engage with it using the techniques of literary analysis to make my understanding of my own image even more "silver and exact".³⁴⁰ I try to act as author, critic, self and inquirer at once and as each (and out perform myself). The realization that I can at once hold all these roles, as I re-performed my own narrative through literary analysis, helped me to understand the brakes I had put on my own self examination, those lurking silenced parts of a narrative that I would not reveal, even to myself. This at the heart of teacher inquiry: the willingness and ability to examine self deeply and honestly. More is included in the narrative offered above than I had ever shared with any audience. On each re-performance the boundaries had expanded, true, but when told to secondary school students there was one level of what was "acceptable" that could only be very slightly moved beyond when "The Hair Performance" moved to other audiences such as cohorts of graduate diploma or MEd students. This isn't simply a matter of euphemism or double-entendre to hide a less socially acceptable thought but a genuine and deeply rooted need to actually keep parts of myself as completely hidden as I can.

I had an intention of making "The Hair Narrative" more therapeutic, much more a catharsis when I began writing it. Internally the act of writing was very much an attempt to use the recollections of life as a purging, but when I came to commit my narrative to a shared form, here in this dissertation, some of that deep scouring of memory and emotion succumbed to the awareness that there was an audience, and not just an awareness in the usual rhetorical sense of who it was being written for, but merely that

³⁴⁰ Such is Sylvia Plath's description of a mirror in "Mirror" a phrase she used in allusion to Carson McCuller's description of train tracks.

there was to be an audience at all. It seems a good stance for the teacher inquirer to take. One must look very hard, very critically in vulnerable self examination but one must also be aware that "publication" to a class, or group of colleagues, or university instructor can be of the result of that deep exploration and need not include it.

As I wrote the narrative, and much more particularly, as I looked at the narrative through a literary lens, my own words entered a third space³⁴¹ in my experience of my performed self and myself. This third space is one which allowed me a new perspective on what I performed and then wrote and now have analyzed using somewhat traditional literary analytic techniques. While dwelling in that third space I was empowered to use my love of language, landscape, soundscape, writing, and doodling to not only see anew what my performance and script may have added to my perspective of myself, but to see and experience and feel that which I had neither consciously intended. I had made a journey into the world of Kafka's trial, of accusation, intricacy, puzzlement, and found value in "narrative chasms, black holes, still moments, silences, as pedagogical spaces."³⁴²

What Matters

A doctoral dissertation, I believe, needs to be more than an examination or exposition. It should also be a contribution to a field; with luck perhaps even a novel contribution to that field. It should "matter."³⁴³

This dissertation matters to me as a teacher researcher. It represents the longest and most sustained teacher inquiry in which I have engaged at any time in my career. Through the initial performances of "The Hair Story" I came to understand the extent to which I, as a teacher, am engaged in performance throughout my teaching day as well as in my life outside the classroom. More importantly I was engaged in performative

³⁴¹ Following Ted Aoki's notion of teaching as in-dwelling from "Teaching as In Dwelling Between Two Curriculum Worlds." *Curriculum in a New Key: The Collected Works of Ted T. Aoki*. eds. William Pinar and Rita Irwin. (pp. 159-165). (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2005) I see almost any time in which we are "slave to two masters" a place of in-dwelling.

³⁴² Lynn Fels, in conversation, 2014.

³⁴³ Vicki Kelly, in conversation, 2014.

inquiry, that amazing space where interstandings, realizations, connections and growth occur as one performs. The performance became a place that made a space for my awareness of myself as a teacher and fellow learner to grow. Much later, when I was introduced to the work on performative inquiry, I could see in the enhanced vision of retrospect the immense value of performative inquiry to me as teacher inquirer.

my body knows
that my mind is in charge
and my ideas
treat it like a puppet
(with parts that will not move
when the strings are
pulled)

and it is not
just rusting joints
that are to blame.

other bodies
interfere
with grace
with sensuality
with sexuality

that pulls
the strings away from
points of attachment
and the mind
in charge only of itself
forgets my body
to desire others.

my body dangles on strings
on the hook where my mind
has hung it,

half a grin
still painted
on its face.

Marlowe Irvine

This dissertation matters to me as an instructor of teacher researchers. The writing of "The Hair Story" reminded me and convinced me of the immense value of the deeply affecting and practice enhancing nature of narrative inquiry. By the time that I began committing "The Hair Story" to digital paper I had been working as an instructor of teacher researchers, both in action research and in teacher inquiry, for several years. I had encouraged narrative inquiry both in the sense of language based narratives as well as visual representational narratives with all my groups of students, but I was somewhat inauthentic in this. I was asking students to engage in a practice I had only touched the surface of in the past.

When I came to write my hair narrative, I resolved to push the limits of my internal exploration, to follow every thought, to re-remember times and places and the consequences of the events that shaped me. To gather stories from others. I asked family and friends and they returned answers which I tried to take to heart. Even my physician helped by asking for a medical history when we first met just after I had chosen to write the narrative down. In order to answer one of her questions I had to speak to my mother about the coma I had suffered at age three. We had never spoken of it; I had no recollection, and the tale of the coma was surprising and evoked a great many speculations in me about the long term effects of such a life event. I wrote over weeks of travelling to teach teacher inquiry to groups in other parts of the province; my days were filled with collegial, enriching encounters and shared learning with my teacher inquiry students; my evenings and weekends were seas of tears evoked by the intensity of the memories as I transcribed an internal "script" onto digital paper. But the narrative was authentic and incredibly revealing.

This dissertation matters to me as an artist and writer. I have learned through all of the work on my PhD that the creative arts have an important place in my life as a learner and teacher. Composing verse, creating sculpture, and public performance have always been a way in which I came to understandings of my place in the world personally, but I came to interstand with a new community of learners and teachers that the creative arts also have a place in teacher inquiry. The inclusion of practices in arts based inquiry has added tremendous richness to my art and writing. The teacher series was prompted by a friend who makes her entire living through creating and teaching

painting and drawing. She had wondered how I could stand a job as uncreative as teaching and the seven verses of Teacher I to VII were my response and dedicated to her "because I need her to understand what I am."³⁴⁴

What Matters Next

With this dissertation I hope to add dimension to the scope of teacher inquiry. I have added, for good or ill, a technique or component taken from sources outside of education and imported it into my own education because of the deeply personal nature of the inquiry that I have undertaken and its outcomes in my own life. I have also added the literary analysis component that I believe goes beyond that of the more "mainstream" lines of narrative analysis with which I had become familiar while working with graduate students in teacher education. I feel I have provided "a renewed look at practices that can widen and deepen ... reflexive practice among teachers. The 'coming of age of teacher' story is one that should be, methinks, an ongoing story for educators."³⁴⁵

This dissertation operates at the convergence of several zones of endeavour: performative inquiry, narrative inquiry and teacher inquiry, along with pedagogic performance, and pedagogical stories. I have sought, through my work, to explore a traditional practice, literary analysis, in an innovative way; to draw from one tradition, literary analysis in language arts, into other traditions at the forward edge of educational research. Beyond mattering to me, I would like my work to matter "back" to those areas of endeavour.

Literary analysis, reclaimed and retooled, might be persuaded to move into new spheres and contribute to teacher education research. A literary analysis as illustrated here has a role in teacher inquiry; literary analysis has also demonstrated its useful application here in performative and narrative inquiry. In the future I would encourage my students and myself to look at scripts and self narratives for connections between the form of the language, gesture and dialogue and their function and content. I would

³⁴⁴ M. Irvine, "Teacher I to VII: Dedication", Unpublished Manuscript, 2005.

³⁴⁵ Charles Scott, in conversation, 2014.

encourage my students and myself to re-visit notions of figurative writing that they may not have examined since K-12 Language Arts classes for insights that might be brought to examination of their own narratives. I have demonstrated a utility for this revival of close reading and literary analysis for the author of narrative and script.

Close reading may also be a useful tool to those others with whom teacher inquiry narratives are shared. My experiences with the insights brought by others to my work has led me to see the place of using literary analysis as an informing technique in examining the narratives of others. A new direction for me will be in the gathering of teacher narratives and the application of close reading techniques to discover how purposeful or accidental uses of visual, sound, or figurative techniques add new dimension to the understanding of the pedagogic as well as personal/professional narrative of practice and identity.

This dissertation has striven to demonstrate that the richness of language, image, sound technique, literary allusion, metaphor, and simile and many other figurative ideas, whether deliberate or accidental, that arise through the act of performing and of composing self-narrative needs to be considered as a potentially useful idea, to be shared with students, educators, and scholars, to push writers to consider questions that may not have been immediately obvious. Ideas involved in and surrounding literary analysis belong in teacher inquiry because some of the depth and insight of the figurative use of language deserves not to be taken for granted nor go unmentioned or unnoticed. All involved in teacher inquiry engage in the scholarship of the field through written ideas and engage in further contribution to the educational field through some form of communicative language use. Those made more aware of the discourses of language forms and functions through literary technique may gain from more insightful reading but also from more engaging and rhetorically powerful writing.

The composition of this dissertation has also been an experience of incredible internal change. "We are human beings in constant fluidity, revealing even as we conceal who we are, our desires, our longings, our betrayals, our vulnerabilities."³⁴⁶ This

³⁴⁶ Lynn Fels, "Coming into Presence" p. 9.

change and the understanding that the change is constant and necessary came to me out of my doctoral work and very much matters to me. The fluidity of my understanding of "myself" has filled me and will continue to fill me with teacher inquiry questions.

My guess is that I will keep teaching as long as these questions arise. The fact that I'm asking them means I'm still shaping my teaching persona, still trying to find the right way to present the material, still interested in the kind of communication that teaching involves. I'm still working to create a face, or faces, that will prove useful, true, and distinct. My magic closet is now full of masks; some fit well, others don't. Nevertheless, I'm a little less frightened by the variety in there than I once was, and perhaps a little more willing to play with the mask in front of the class, wiggle it free, peek around its fiery shield.³⁴⁷

I have come to the re-realization that I cannot encourage or assist or support changes in my students without changing myself and those changes must almost always be deep, profound and life-altering. In changing myself I open myself to the changes in others that they wish to make. The realization regarding changes in myself is not the reason for the changes I make inside "myself": they are a joyous by-product. The change in myself came through difficulty and feelings of inadequacy and while I often wished I had been sheltered from those pains and the scars they left behind I know now that I was made who I am in acquiring the scars and I will not seek to protect others from all harm. In the process of my studies in education I have re-authored, and reopened aspects of my life but I also have tracked forward, sought anew and must acknowledge the unique journey that I may not have made through less thoroughly examined life experiences, or my art, or my teaching. I have not become a little more "wide awake"³⁴⁸ but become awake differently. Not in a better, more elevated way, just a different one, though I do not think I was ever "sleeping in [my] shoes."³⁴⁹

³⁴⁷ J. Parini. p. 69.

³⁴⁸ In Maxine Greene's sense of "wide awakesness" from "Wide Awakesness and the Moral Life" . *Landscapes of Learning*. (New York: Teachers College Press. 1978.) pp 42-51.

³⁴⁹ Neil Young, "Keep on Rockin' in the Free World." *Freedom* [audio recording]. 1989.

I wish the future of my work to be the same, a ferocious moving into life. I have dug through the ashes and picked at the scars of my life and I have learned a determination that comes from leaning into the uncomfortable questions I have written or will yet write for myself that are to be embraced and perhaps answered. I have come to a place with much peace like a still spot below the rapids in a river but very soon I will

want to be swirled and whirled, girded and buoyed, prodded and poked, scraped and caressed, chilled and warmed. When I wash up at a shore and sit in a calmer pool,... it is only to see the water as though it is still before I wade in again and lift my feet from the bottom.³⁵⁰

³⁵⁰ Marlowe Irvine, "Situating and Swimming," unpublished manuscript, July, 2010.

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Appendix A. Excerpt from *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee. pp 50 - 52.

One Saturday Jem and I decided to go exploring with our air-rifles to see if we could find a rabbit or a squirrel. We had gone about five hundred yards beyond the Radley Place when I noticed Jem squinting at something down the street. He had turned his head to one side and was looking out of the corners of his eyes.

"Whatcha looking at?"

"That old dog down yonder," he said.

"That's old Tim Johnson, ain't it?"

"Yeah."

Tim Johnson was the property of Mr. Harry Johnson who drove the Mobile bus and lived on the southern edge of town. Tim was a liver-colored bird dog, the pet of Maycomb.

"What's he doing?"

"I don't know, Scout. We better go home."

"Aw Jem, it's February."

"I don't care, I'm gonna tell Cal."

We raced home and ran to the kitchen.

"Cal," said Jem, "can you come down the sidewalk a minute?" "What for, Jem? I can't come down the sidewalk every time you want me."

"There's somethin' wrong with an old dog down yonder."

Calpurnia sighed. "I can't wrap up any dog's foot now. There's some gauze in the bathroom, go get it and do it yourself."

Jem shook his head. "He's sick, Cal. Something's wrong with him."

"What's he doin', trying to catch his tail?"

"No, he's doin' like this." Jem gulped like a goldfish, hunched his shoulders and twitched his torso. "He's goin' like that, only not like he means to."

"Are you telling me a story, Jem Finch?" Calpurnia's voice hardened.

"No Cal, I swear I'm not."

"Was he runnin'?"

"No, he's just moseyin' along, so slow you can't hardly tell it. He's comin' this way."

Calpurnia rinsed her hands and followed Jem into the yard. "I don't see any dog," she said.

She followed us beyond the Radley Place and looked where Jem pointed. Tim Johnson was not much more than a speck in the distance, but he was closer to us. He

walked erratically, as if his right legs were shorter than his left legs. He reminded me of a car stuck in a sandbed.

“He’s gone lopsided,” said Jem.

Calpurnia stared, then grabbed us by the shoulders and ran us home. She shut the wood door behind us, went to the telephone and shouted, “Gimme Mr. Finch’s office!”

“Mr. Finch!” she shouted. “This is Cal. I swear to God there’s a mad dog down the street a piece—he’s comin’ this way, yes sir, he’s—Mr. Finch, I declare he is—old Tim Johnson, yes sir... yessir... yes—”

She hung up and shook her head when we tried to ask her what Atticus had said. She rattled the telephone hook and said, “Miss Eula May—now ma’am, I’m through talkin’ Mr. Finch, please don’t connect me no more—listen, Miss Eula May, can you call Miss Rachel and Miss Stephanie Crawford and whoever’s got a phone on this street and tell ‘em a mad dog’s comin’? Please ma’am!”

Calpurnia listened. “I know it’s February, Miss Eula May, but I know a mad dog when I see one. Please ma’am hurry!”

Calpurnia asked Jem, “Radleys got a phone?”

Jem looked in the book and said no.

“They won’t come out anyway, Cal.”

“I don’t care, I’m gonna tell ‘em.”

She ran to the front porch, Jem and I at her heels. “You stay in that house!” she yelled.

Calpurnia’s message had been received by the neighbourhood. Every wood door within our range of vision was closed tight. We saw no trace of Tim Johnson. We watched Calpurnia running toward the Radley Place, holding her skirt and apron above her knees. She went up to the front steps and banged on the door. She got no answer, and she shouted, “Mr. Nathan, Mr. Arthur, mad dog’s comin’! Mad dog’s comin’!”

“She’s supposed to go around in back,” I said.

Jem shook his head. “Don’t make any difference now,” he said.

Calpurnia pounded on the door in vain. No one acknowledged her warning; no one seemed to have heard it.

As Calpurnia sprinted to the back porch a black Ford swung into the driveway. Atticus and Mr. Heck Tate got out.

Mr. Heck Tate was the sheriff of Maycomb County. He was as tall as Atticus, but thinner. He was long-nosed, wore boots with shiny metal eye-holes, boot pants and a lumber jacket. His belt had a row of bullets sticking in it. He carried a heavy rifle. When he and Atticus reached the porch, Jem opened the door.

“Stay inside, son,” said Atticus. “Where is he, Cal?”

“He oughta be here by now,” said Calpurnia, pointing down the street.

“Not runnin’, is he?” asked Mr. Tate.

“Naw sir, he’s in the twitchin’ stage, Mr. Heck.”

“Should we go after him, Heck?” asked Atticus.

“We better wait, Mr. Finch. They usually go in a straight line, but you never can tell. He might follow the curve—hope he does or he’ll go straight in the Radley back yard. Let’s wait a minute.”

“Don’t think he’ll get in the Radley yard,” said Atticus. “Fence ’ll stop him. He’ll probably follow the road...”

I thought mad dogs foamed at the mouth, galloped, leaped and lunged at throats, and I thought they did it in August. Had Tim Johnson behaved thus, I would have been less frightened.

Nothing is more deadly than a deserted, waiting street. The trees were still, the mockingbirds were silent, the carpenters at Miss Maudie’s house had vanished. I heard Mr. Tate sniff, then blow his nose. I saw him shift his gun to the crook of his arm. I saw Miss Stephanie Crawford’s face framed in the glass window of her front door. Miss Maudie appeared and stood beside her. Atticus put his foot on the rung of a chair and rubbed his hand slowly down the side of his thigh.

“There he is,” he said softly. Tim Johnson came into sight, walking dazedly in the inner rim of the curve parallel to the Radley house.

“Look at him,” whispered Jem. “Mr. Heck said they walked in a straight line. He can’t even stay in the road.”

“He looks more sick than anything,” I said.

“Let anything get in front of him and he’ll come straight at it.”

Mr. Tate put his hand to his forehead and leaned forward. “He’s got it all right, Mr. Finch.”

Tim Johnson was advancing at a snail’s pace, but he was not playing or sniffing at foliage: he seemed dedicated to one course and motivated by an invisible force that was inching him toward us. We could see him shiver like a horse shedding flies; his jaw opened and shut; he was a list, but he was being pulled gradually toward us.

“He’s lookin’ for a place to die,” said Jem.

Mr. Tate turned around. “He’s far from dead, Jem, he hasn’t got started yet.”

Tim Johnson reached the side street that ran in front of the Radley Place, and what remained of his poor mind made him pause and seem to consider which road he would take. He made a few hesitant steps and stopped in front of the Radley gate; then he tried to turn around, but was having difficulty.

Atticus said, “He’s within range, Heck. You better get him before he goes down the side street—Lord knows who’s around the corner. Go inside, Cal.”

Calpurnia opened the screen door, latched it behind her, then unlatched it and held onto the hook. She tried to block Jem and me with her body, but we looked out from beneath her arms.

“Take him, Mr. Finch.” Mr. Tate handed the rifle to Atticus; Jem and I nearly fainted.

“Don’t waste time, Heck,” said Atticus. “Go on.”

“Mr. Finch, this is a one-shot job.” Atticus shook his head vehemently: “Don’t just stand there, Heck! He won’t wait all day for you—”

“For God’s sake, Mr. Finch, look where he is! Miss and you’ll go straight into the Radley house! I can’t shoot that well and you know it!”

“I haven’t shot a gun in thirty years—”

Mr. Tate almost threw the rifle at Atticus. “I’d feel mighty comfortable if you did now,” he said.

In a fog, Jem and I watched our father take the gun and walk out into the middle of the street. He walked quickly, but I thought he moved like an underwater swimmer: time had slowed to a nauseating crawl.

When Atticus raised his glasses Calpurnia murmured, “Sweet Jesus help him,” and put her hands to her cheeks.

Atticus pushed his glasses to his forehead; they slipped down, and he dropped them in the street. In the silence, I heard them crack. Atticus rubbed his eyes and chin; we saw him blink hard.

In front of the Radley gate, Tim Johnson had made up what was left of his mind. He had finally turned himself around, to pursue his original course up our street. He made two steps forward, then stopped and raised his head. We saw his body go rigid.

With movements so swift they seemed simultaneous, Atticus’s hand yanked a ball-tipped lever as he brought the gun to his shoulder.

The rifle cracked. Tim Johnson leaped, flopped over and crumpled on the sidewalk in a brown-and-white heap. He didn’t know what hit him.